NATION

Delhi to Siliguri in six hours? WB to get its first bullet train

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Adani Asia's richest person again with $89.2B net worth: Forbes

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Suthar's 3 wickets leave Afghans 5 down at stump

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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India border row: Nepal says no to 3rd party mediation

Says wants to resolve boundary row via diplomacy, open heart

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Nepal wants to resolve its border dispute with India through existing bilateral mechanisms as "no problem is too large and complex" when both sides meet with an open heart, rational mind and mutual respect, Nepalese Foreign Minister Shishir Khanal said on Sunday, effectively endorsing New Delhi's rejection of any third-party involvement.

Speaking a day after talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Khanal said Kathmandu does not view India through the "distorted, hyper-sensitive lens" of modern geopolitics but seeks a partnership centred on Nepal's economic transformation and deeper cooperation with a rising India.

His remarks come amid controversy over Nepalese Prime Minister Balendra Shah's recent suggestion that China and the United Kingdom could help resolve the long-running dispute over Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura and Kalapani. India had firmly rejected any third-party role. Khanal clarified that references to the UK were only in the context of accessing historical records from British archives.

Nepal Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during a meeting in New Delhi —PTI

The minister reiterated Nepal's claim over the disputed territories but stressed that the issue should be settled through bilateral dialogue. He also defended Nepal's objections to the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra route through Lipulekh, saying Kathmandu's concerns relate to agreements between India and China involving territory Nepal claims as its own. He said Nepal had conveyed its position through diplomatic channels to both countries.

Highlighting the close relationship between the neighbours, Khanal said Indians and Nepalese are "children of the same rivers, the same mountains and the same ancient wisdom". He described 2026 as the most favourable opportunity in decades to elevate ties and said Nepal's new government was keen to expand cooperation in trade, connectivity, energy and critical technologies.

"When we look across the border, we see a rising India — a dynamic, fast-growing technology and economic powerhouse," Khanal said, adding that Nepal wished to contribute its own "aspiring energy" to the partnership. —PTI

In 1st big reshuffle, DKS appoints Pronab as CID head

BENGALURU, 7 JUNE

The Karnataka government on Sunday posted about a reshuffle of senior IAS and IPS officials after the new cabinet took charge.

IPS officer Pronab Mohanty has been posted as Director General of Police (DGP), Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Special Units and Economic Offences. He has additionally been given concurrent charge DGP (Cyber Crimes), CID Bengaluru. Mohanty is known for leading the Special Investigation Team (SIT) that looked into the alleged mass burials in the temple town of Dharmasthala.

Meanwhile, senior IAS officer Anjum Parwez was posted as Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) of the Forest, Ecology and Environment Department. Tushar Girinath had replaced Parwez as ACS to the chief minister after D K Shivakumar took charge as Chief Minister on 3 June.

Munish Moudgil, Special Commissioner (Admin, Revenue and IT), Greater Bengaluru Awuthority, has been given concurrent charge of the post of Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister (Programme and Project Implementation). The post has been declared equivalent in status and responsibilities to the cadre post of Principal Secretary to the Government.

Deepa Cholan has been transferred as Secretary, Transport Department, Bengaluru. Cauvery BB has been posted to the position vacated by her.

Venkatesh MV has been transferred as Registrar for Co-operative Societies. Dr Selvamani R has been transferred as Commissioner for Transport and Road Safety, Bengaluru. Chandragupta has been transferred as Inspector General of Police, Intelligence. The post has been declared equivalent to Inspector General of Police, CID. —PTI

NTA releases NEET re-exam city info slip; test on 21 June

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

The National Testing Agency (NTA) released the exam city intimation slip for the NEET-UG 2026 re-examination on Sunday. The test is scheduled to be held on 21 June.

Candidates can now check their allotted examination city for NEET-UG 2026. Log in with your application number and password to view and download your slip, the NTA said in a post on X.

As per a notice issued by the agency, the re-examination will be conducted in pen-and-paper mode from 2 pm to 5.15pm in 551 cities in India and 14 cities abroad.

The NTA clarified that the exam city intimation slip is not the admit card and is being issued solely to inform candidates about the city where their examination centre will be located. The agency urged candidates to stay updated through its official websites for the latest announcements. —PTI

>>>More on Page 3

— PTI

Politics dominated by Hindu-Muslim agenda: CJP

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 7 JUNE

Cockroach Janta Party founder Abhijeet Dipke on Sunday alleged that politics in the country over the last decade is centred around the Hindu-Muslim agenda, calling for a change in the government's priorities and flagging unemployment as a pressing issue. Addressing a press conference in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, a day after leading an agitation in Delhi, Dipke reiterated the demand for Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation amid the row over the alleged NEET paper leak and CBSE OSM glitches. He vowed to prepare an agenda to overhaul the education system after Pradhan's resignation. —PTI

>>>MORE ON PAGE 4

Bengal couple, their son held in DU professor's murder

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Delhi Police have arrested a West Bengal couple and apprehended their minor son for the murder of Debosmita Paul, an assistant professor at Shivaji College, allegedly over a long-running property dispute. Paul, who lived alone in east Delhi's Vasundhara Enclave, was found dead in her flat on June 3. Police said the accused family had been occupying her ancestral property in Burdwan since 2023 and allegedly travelled nearly 1,400 km to Delhi after she issued a final eviction warning. Investigators traced the suspects through CCTV footage, guest house records and electronic surveillance. The accused allegedly used false identities to evade detection. Police recovered the victim's mobile phone, the suspected weapon, clothing and travel documents. The breakthrough came after investigators detained the cab driver who had transported the suspects and analysed ride details to identify the passengers. —PTI

DKS TAKES NAMMA METRO

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar travels on a Namma Metro train from Vidhana Soudha to Kanakapura Road on Sunday while heading to his home turf for a gratitude tour to thank his constituents. Shivakumar said the move was aimed at avoiding inconvenience to Bengaluru commuters —SALAR NEWS >>>MORE ON PAGE 2

India's LPG still cheaper: Govt

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Indian households continue to pay among the lowest prices for cooking gas globally despite a sharp rise in international LPG prices triggered by disruptions in West Asia, the government said on Sunday, a day after increasing domestic LPG prices by Rs 29 per cylinder.

The price of a 14.2-kg domestic LPG cylinder in Delhi was raised to Rs 942 from Rs 913, while beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) will continue to pay an effective Rs 642 per cylinder after receiving a subsidy of Rs 300 per refill on the first four refills annually, down from 9 refills announced last year.

The increase follows a Rs 60-per-cylinder hike on 7 March, taking the cumulative hike to Rs 89 per 14.2-kg cylinder. State-run oil marketing companies were estimated to be losing about Rs 703 on every LPG cylinder sold before the latest revision.

The government said the cost of supplying a domestic LPG cylinder has risen to more than Rs 1,600 following a surge in international prices that followed the outbreak of war in West Asia in February.

India's LPG import costs are linked to the Saudi Contract Price (CP), the global benchmark for the fuel. The benchmark has risen about 46 per cent since February after disruptions linked to the Strait of Hormuz tightened supplies from the Gulf region.

Despite the increase, Indian LPG prices remain below those prevailing in Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and much lower than in the US, Australia and Canada. — PTI

>>>More on Page 2

INDIA bloc to huddle in Delhi, TMC back in fold

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Leaders of 23 Opposition parties in INDIA bloc will meet in the national capital on Monday to redraw their strategy against BJP and address internal differences following recent Assembly election setbacks that altered the alliance's political dynamics.

Senior leaders expected to attend the meeting at the Constitution Club include Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, TMC Chief Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee, SP President Akhilesh Yadav, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, along with Left leaders and representatives of several smaller parties.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said 23 parties had confirmed participation in the "INDIA janbandhan" meeting. While some parties would not attend for their own reasons, they remained opposed to the Narendra Modi government's policies, he said. —PTI

>>>More on Page 3

ISRAEL HITS BEIRUT'S SUBURBS DAYS AFTER CEASEFIRE

BEIRUT, 7 JUNE

Israel struck the southern Beirut suburbs on Sunday, just days after a ceasefire agreement in Washington went into effect.

A statement from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the strikes were retaliation for the Hezbollah firing towards northern Israel earlier, and that the attacks targeted "command centres" in urban neighbourhoods. Hezbollah did not immediately claim responsibility for firing at Israel.

The strikes come after the Lebanon and Israel renewed a ceasefire agreement. At least two people were killed and several others injured at the time of publishing. Israel also issued evacuation orders for the port city of Tyre.

Plumes of smoke rise as Israel bombs the Dahieh, or Beirut's suburbs, a key Hezbollah base, on Sunday —SCREENGRAB

Israel had already struck the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital twice since the first agreement between Lebanon and Israel went into effect on 17 April. However, Iran has warned that attacking Beirut could renew a full scale war, even as strikes over southern Lebanon continue and Hezbollah and Israeli troops clash daily — PTI

>>>More on Page 6

Varanasi to shift meat, fish shops to city outskirts

VARANASI, 7 JUNE

The Varanasi Municipal Corporation has decided to shift meat and fish shops operating within the city limits – all 350 to 400 of them – to designated locations on the outskirts as part of efforts to improve urban management and cleanliness, officials said on Sunday.

The proposal was approved at a meeting of the municipal corporation's governing body held at the Town Hall building in Maidagin on Saturday under the chairmanship of Mayor Ashok Kumar Tiwari, Public Relations Officer Sandeep Srivastava said.

Municipal Commissioner Himanshu Nagpal informed the House that Ramnagar, Sujabad, Ganeshpur, Avleshpur and Shivpur have been identified for relocation in the first phase of the project, officials said.

However, Ashraf, who runs a meat shop in Nathupur, said relocating the shops outside the city would increase prices for trades as customers as they would have to travel for daily purchase. —PTI

FAMILY ALLEGES 'TRAP'

Indian delivering pizza order shot dead in Philadelphia

HYDERABAD, 7 JUNE

A 28-year-old man from Hyderabad was allegedly shot dead in the United States while delivering pizzas, his family members said here.

The incident occurred in Philadelphia, US on the intervening night of 5 June and 6 June, according to information received by his family in Gundlapochampally near here.

The Consulate General of India in New York in a post on 'X' late on Saturday night said : "We are deeply saddened by the untimely demise of Mr Anshul Kuncha, an Indian national in Philadelphia, PA. Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences to his family during this difficult time. The Consulate is in touch with Anushul's family and is extending all possible assistance."

Anshul Kuncha was orignially from Hyderabad —x

Kuncha worked in an MNC in North Philadelphia, US. He left for the US about four years ago for studies. He was doing pizza deliveries on weekends for extra source of income, Tanvi, the sister of the deceased, told mediapersons.

"We were informed that he (Anshul) was shot in the head three times and left on the road," his sister said. Nothing was stolen from him, she said, adding he was told to deliver pizza in an abandoned area and they later came to know it was a "decoy."

"It was a trap. It was to kill him. I don't know what they gained out of it or what intentions they had," she said.

She sought justice and appealed to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to bring back the mortal remains of her brother at the earliest. —PTI

DKS says his door is open to the JD(S)

Gets rousing reception during first visit to Kanakapura after becoming CM

KANAKAPURA, 7 JUNE

New Chief Minister DK Shivakumar visited his home constituency of Kanakapura as part of his "gratitude tour" and thanked his supporters amid a rousing reception.

Shivakumar is visiting about twenty odd locations across the constituency, including Doddalahalli, his native village. He also visited several temples, after travelling by Namma Metro from Vidhana Soudha to Silk Institute – the last stop on Kanakapura Road.

In Kanakapura, he said that he had "opened the doors" for the JD(S) and said the party leaders should "think about how to make use" of it.

"We helped JD(S)'s Anitha Kumaraswamy (in 2018); we had previously helped (HD) Kumaraswamy win in order to keep the BJP at bay. I won't dwell on that now," Shivakumar said. He added that the doors are still open for the Opposition party.

In 2018, Congress and JD(S) had allied together after winning the 2018 Assembly elections. In the 2018 bypolls in Ramanagara, a JD(S) stronghold, the alliance decided to support Anitha, HD Kumaraswamy's wife. However, the alliance later fell apart, and the JD(S) has since allied with the BJP.

Notably, Shivakumar shares much if the same voter base – Vokkaligas – with Kumaraswamy and JD(S).

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar at a rally in his home constituency of Kanakapura; the Congress leader and his brother DK Suresh meet their mother Gowramma, on Sunday —*X @DKSHIVAKUMAR*

I AM HERE FOR YOU

Amid resounding chants of "DK, DK", Shivakumar told reporters that he was seeking to express gratitude to those who nurtured him for the last 40 years.

"I have come to Kanakapura today. I also spoke to party workers in Harohalli and Kaggalipura. I pay my respects to you -- the people of Kanakapura who blessed me and elected me to the Assembly eight times," he said. "When I am within the boundary of this constituency, I'm not the Chief Minister. I'm your servant".

HEALTH, INFRA BOOST FOR KANAKAPURA

Shivakumar announced intentions to set up a medical college in Kanakapura taluk.

"Soon it will come up here. You need not go to Bengaluru for any health issues," he said. "We should stop our people from migrating to Bengaluru, and they should be with good health, education and shelter."

Noting that there is an industrial town at Harohalli, Shivakumar said he will issue an order requiring private companies to prioritise locals during recruitment. "But, you should not form unions or jump into strikes once recruited by the companies."

He told people not to leave agriculture, and not to sell their land, adding that land prices have increased since the Ramanagara district was renamed as Bengaluru South district. He said that the BJP and JD(S) criticised the renaming, but "criticisms die".

The CM said he will appoint an officer to look into the constituency people's grievances and urged citizens to be prepared for the upcoming SIR.

DELAY IN ASCENSION

"I'm not denying that there was a delay, but Siddaramaiah kept his promise, followed the party's directions, stepped down and gave me the CM post. We both will lead in the 2028 Assembly polls and bring back the Congress to power in the State. I need your support for this," he said. —*Salar news*

DKS discusses bilateral ties with Malaysian PM

BENGALURU, 7 JUNE

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar spoke with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, discussing ways to strengthen relations, particularly in education, technology, innovation, and people-to-people exchanges.

Shivakumar stated on X that the Malaysian PM called to congratulate him on his recent appointment and extended an invitation to visit Malaysia.

He expressed his hope to visit at a mutually convenient time and invited the PM to the State.

"With many Malaysian students pursuing their education in Karnataka, there is immense potential to deepen our partnership," Shivakumar said. —*PTI*

Man critical after wild bear attack in HD Kote

MYSURU, 7 JUNE

A 30-year-old man was critically injured after being attacked by a wild bear in Balle forest range, Nagarahole Wildlife division, HD Kote taluk of the State in the early hours of Sunday. According to forest officials, Upendra of Balle tribal hamlet was collecting forest minor produce with others when the bear suddenly appeared and attacked him. His companions ran for safety as the bear inflicted multiple serious injuries on his body. His friends managed to rescue him after considerable effort and drove the bear away into the woods. Upendra was immediately taken for first aid at a nearby health facility, and due to the severity of his injuries, he was referred to Vivekananda Youth Movement Hospital in Saragur on the recommendation of officials. The incident has caused fear among residents, who criticised the forest department for their failure. Speaking to Salar, Antharasanthe ACF Madhu said officials rushed to the scene, shifted Upendra to hospital, and informed higher authorities of the attack. —*Salar News*

Party's internal policy cost me KPCC Chief post: Jarkiholi

BELAGAVI, 7 JUNE

Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Satish Jarkiholi on Sunday said the Congress party's internal "one person, one post" policy was the key reason he was not given Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president post.

Speaking to reporters at his residence in Gokak, Jarkiholi, who was seen as the front runner for the top KPPC post, said he was content with his current portfolio allocation.

"The party follows a strict 'one person, one post' policy. Since I am already serving as a minister, I could not be entrusted with the responsibility of KPCC President. I have no grievance, and everyone in the party must abide by its rules," he said.

Jarkiholi clarified that he had not sought any particular portfolio during the recent Cabinet reshuffle. He said the party leadership and the Chief Minister had decided to retain him in the PWD, which he had been handling earlier.

While Satish Jarkiholi was initially seen as a frontrunner for the KPCC President post, it went to MLC BK Hariprasad —*X/@JARKIHOLISATISH*

"I am pleased to continue in the Public Works Department. It will help ensure the completion of projects that were initiated earlier," he added.

Jarkiholi said several major road, bridge and infrastructure projects had been executed successfully over the past three years.

Responding to concerns over Belagavi district's representation in the Cabinet, Jarkiholi noted that the reshuffle was not yet complete. "Only the first list has been announced. Another list is expected, and Belagavi district is certain to receive additional representation. There is no question of sidelining a large district like Belagavi." —*Salar News*

CM seeks report on fuel price hike

BENGALURU, 7 JUNE

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday said he had sought a report from officials on the recent hike in gas prices.

Domestic cooking gas LPG price was raised by Rs 29 per cylinder, the second increase in three months. On 7 March, there was a Rs 60-per-cylinder hike, taking the cumulative hike to Rs 89 per 14.2-kg cylinder. State-run oil marketing companies were estimated to be losing about Rs 703 on every LPG cylinder sold before the latest revision.

"I have sought a report on the gas (LPG) price hike. More than that, industrial gas and industrial diesel prices have increased at an alarming rate. I am getting a report on it, I will speak on the matter tomorrow," Shivakumar told reporters.

Meanwhile, new Urban Development Minister Yathindra Siddaramaiah said that the BJP government was "anti-people" and was looking at its own coffers.

The rate of domestic gas cylinders was raised by Rs 29 by the Centre, on Saturday —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

Yathindra alleged that when the crude oil price was lower in the international market, the Centre did not pass the benefit to the people, but was quick to burden them during instability.

Home Minister Priyank Kharge quipped on X that Prime Minister Narendra Modi might now ask people to "eat less" as part of austerity measure. He alleged that the price of commercial cylinders are at a record high. —*Agencies*

NEW GOVT, OLD PROBLEMS

With half of the road under repair at Kadirenahalli Cross, near Banashankari in the City, garbage has been thrown in the middle of the road on Sunday —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

With 7,000 duped of crores, CID takes over Adityaraj Capital probe

BELAGAVI, 7 JUNE

The State government has transferred the investigation into the Adityaraj Capital case to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), following allegations that the firm illegally collected public deposits by promising high returns without necessary approvals. A similar probe into Belagavi-based Shivam Associates has also been handed over to the CID. Belagavi Deputy Commissioner Mohammed Roshan and Police Commissioner Bhushan Borase confirmed that an FIR had been registered against Adityaraj Capital.

Authorities recently raided the company, which offered a monthly 5 per cent return plus 5 per cent towards principal, with no mention of risks in investor agreements, raising concerns of a Ponzi scheme. It is estimated that around 7,000 investors may have been impacted, with sums exceeding Rs 50 crore involved. The company failed to disclose fund utilisation, and investors received cheques. The case is now under detailed investigation by the CID, following a report sent to the Additional Chief Secretary. Meanwhile, CEO Balram Mane, a Maharashtra resident, is absconding; a lookout notice has been issued, and alerts circulated across airports to prevent his departure.

Mane, who surfaced in a video addressing depositors, asserted that the company operates legally. "We are not running the institution by violating any rules. Everything is being conducted legally. No depositor should panic. Your money is safe with us," he said. —*Salar News*

CID finds proof of fraud by Shivam Associates owner

BELAGAVI, 7 JUNE

CID Deputy Inspector General Bhimashankar Guled confirmed that documentary evidence has proven fraudulent activities by Shivam Associates, owned by Shivanand Neelannavar, during the investigation. The briefing aimed to warn the public against falling prey to similar schemes. Despite a joint raid and FIR registration, investors deposited an additional Rs 5 crore with the firm.

Neelannavar collected nearly Rs 2,400 crore from approximately 40,700 investors, with a large part paid back through money from new investors—a scheme which collapsed when liabilities surpassed inflows. The investigation revealed about Rs 540 crore invested in the stock market, incurring losses of roughly Rs 170 crore, with a shortfall of Rs 660 crore, of which Rs 330 crore might be recovered.

Neelannavar illegally transferred Rs 55 crore to his personal account. Authorities seized five luxury vehicles and are acquiring 11 Volvo XC90 SUVs bought with company funds. The CID is scrutinising extensive bank transactions.

The scam likely extended into neighbouring Maharashtra, where coordination is ongoing. Officials aim to recover and redistribute around Rs 400 crore to affected investors through the BUDS Act. —*Salar News*

Bank officer fined Rs 5K for littering in C'ballapur

CHINTAMANI, 7 JUNE

The Chintamani City Municipal Council (CMC) has imposed a Rs 5,000 fine on a bank officer for dumping garbage on a roadside on the outskirts of the town. The violation was detected on Friday when CMC Commissioner GN Chalapathi, during a routine inspection, spotted the man throwing a garbage bag near Oti Tank. The offender allegedly attempted to flee but was intercepted by municipal staff. He was identified as Sharath, a resident of Gundappa Lane and an officer with a nationalised bank. During questioning, he reportedly admitted to regularly disposing of waste at the spot. He paid the penalty on the spot and assured authorities that he would not repeat the offence. Chalapathi told reporters that the CMC has intensified action against littering and banned plastic use across the town. Last year, officials had dumped garbage outside the homes of serial offenders. —*SALAR NEWS*

KOPPAL SHOCKER

Teen suspected of killing dad, sister in Koppal; mom critical

KOPPAL, 7 JUNE

A shocking incident has rocked Hosa Ayodhya village in Gangavathi taluk of Koppal district, where an 18-year-old youth is suspected of attacking his family with a knife, resulting in the deaths of his father and sister and leaving his mother critically injured.

According to police, the accused, identified as Sai Venkatamani, allegedly attacked his father Venkata Naidu, mother Soujanya, 40; and sister Pragathi, 19, with a knife before injuring himself.

Police said that on Saturday evening, Venkata Naidu, his wife Soujanya, daughter Pragathi, and son Sai were sleeping in one room. Around 10.30pm, screams were heard from the room where the family was sleeping. Naidu was reportedly heard shouting for help, when his father, Tatarao, rushed to the room and tried to open the door, only to find it locked. He broke the door open with his neighbours' help, to find the dreadful scene within.

Due to severe blood loss, Pragathi died at the scene. Despite medical efforts, Venkata Naidu succumbed to his injuries on Sunday morning. Soujanya remains under treatment at the Vijayanagara Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS) in Ballari. Sai Venkatamani himself has also been hospitalised, police said.

"Venkata Naidu's father has lodged a complaint, and a murder case has been registered," said including Superintendent of Police Ram L Arasiddi.

The complaint expressed suspicion at his grandson, he added. —*Salar News*

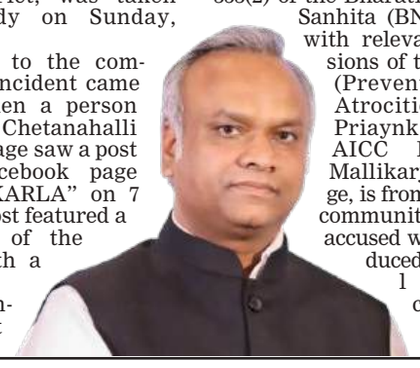
Man held for casteist remarks against Priyank

UDUPI, 7 JUNE

Police on Sunday said they arrested a 48-year-old man in Karkala for allegedly posting casteist comments and issuing a death threat against Home Minister Priyank Kharge on social media.

The accused, a resident of Nalkeda Betta in Kervashe village near Karkala in Udupi district, was taken into custody on Sunday, police said.

According to the complaint, the incident came to light when a person from Attur Chetanahalli in Nitte village saw a post on the Facebook page "NAMMA KARLA" on 7 June. The post featured a photograph of the Priyank with a caption.



The complainant alleged that the accused had commented on the post on 6 June in an extremely abusive and casteist manner against the Minister.

Police said the comment was made with the intent to promote enmity and hatred between communities.

A case has been registered at Karkala City Police Station under Sections 351(3), 196, and 353(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with relevant provisions of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Priaynk, son of AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, is from the Dalit community. The accused will be produced before a local court. —*PTI*

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Keralam reinstates 2 IAS officers suspended by LDF

T'PURAM, 7 JUNE

The Keralam government has reinstated senior IAS officers B Ashok, from the 1998 batch, and N Prasanth, from the 2007 batch, who were previously suspended by the LDF administration. A government order shared by the Chief Minister's Office states that their suspension has been revoked, but disciplinary proceedings will continue in accordance with service rules. The orders clarified that the disciplinary actions would proceed independently. Prasanth was suspended in 2024 over allegations related to misconduct from social media and remarks, while Ashok was suspended earlier this year over alleged violations of service norms, including critical remarks about the government. Both officers held key administrative roles in the state.—*PTI*

Assam CM allocates 'Guardian Districts' ministers

GUWAHATI, 7 JUNE

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced the allocation of 'Guardian Districts' to his 16 cabinet colleagues to oversee development and work with local administration. As 'Guardian Minister', they will ensure smooth implementation of schemes and programmes. Sarma stated, "I am pleased to announce the allocations of Guardian Districts... I am confident they will work closely with district administrations to further progress." Rameswar Teli is assigned Tinsukia and Jorhat, while Atul Bora oversees Kamrup Metropolitan and Dhemaji. Other districts are allocated to various ministers, including Charan Boro, Ajanta Neog, Ashwini Ray Sarkar, and others, ensuring focused development across Assam's districts.—*PTI*

TDP names Vijay, Ramakrishna, Satish for RS polls

AMARAVATI, 7 JUNE

The TDP has nominated Chintakayala Vijay, Bhashyam Ramakrishna, and sitting MP Sana Satish for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections. TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu handed over B-Forms to the candidates, recognising their contributions. Vijay, State General Secretary, expressed gratitude, saying Naidu and Nara Lokesh had shown that loyal leaders would be recognised. Ramakrishna, a prominent educational group chairman, has received awards and engaged in philanthropic activities including scholarships, health camps, and disaster relief. The NDA alliance in Andhra Pradesh plans to contest three of four Rajya Sabha seats, with the YSRCP currently holding seven and TDP two seats. The election is scheduled for 18 June.—*PTI*

Akhilesh alleges crores missing from Ram Temple funds

LUCKNOW, 7 JUNE

Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav claimed that crores of rupees from Ram Temple donations are missing and urged the court to intervene. He said, "The issue is extremely sensitive for devotees of Lord Ram across the world," and described the situation as "highly embarrassing" for the temple trust. Yadav questioned the silence of the temple trust and government, calling it "suspicious." He added, "This is an extremely shameful situation for the temple trust. No one is willing to come forward and offer an explanation." The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister called for court action, emphasising that the matter concerns the deep faith of the global Sanatani community in Lord Ram. —*PTI*

23 INDIA parties meet today after post-polls shake-up

DMK rules out alliance with Cong; Didi goes back to bloc

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Leaders of 23 Opposition parties in INDIA bloc will meet in the national capital on Monday to redraw their strategy against BJP and address internal differences following recent Assembly election setbacks that altered the alliance's political dynamics.

Senior leaders expected to attend the meeting at the Constitution Club include Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, TMC Chief Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee, SP President Akhilesh Yadav, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, along with Left leaders and representatives of several smaller parties.

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said 23 parties had confirmed participation in the "INDIA janbandhan" meeting. While some parties would not attend for their own reasons, they remained opposed to the Narendra Modi government's policies, he said.

DMK and AAP are unlikely to participate. AAP has publicly distanced itself from the alliance, while the DMK decided to boycott the meeting after the Congress ended ties with it in Tamil Nadu and joined the TVK-led government. TVK is expected to be inducted into the bloc.

TMC Chief Mamata Banerjee talks to AAP's Arvind Kejriwal in Delhi on Sunday even as AAP has publicly distanced itself from the alliance —*PTI*

Cong, JMM to contest 1 RS seat each in J'khand

The Congress and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) have agreed to contest one Rajya Sabha seat each in Jharkhand after a breakfast meeting between Chief Minister Hemant Soren and Congress observers Bhupesh Baghel and Ajay Sharma. A formal announcement is expected at a dinner meeting of INDIA bloc MLAs. JMM has fielded former minister Baidyanath Ram, while Congress has nominated senior functionary Pranav Jha. The two seats became available following the death of JMM co-founder Shibu Soren and the retirement of BJP MP Deepak Prakash. Polling is scheduled for 18 June.

Ruling out any future patch-up with Congress, senior DMK leader R S Bharathi on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the national party, comparing its exit from the alliance to "adultery" and said that the Dravidian major will never welcome back defectors.

The meeting comes after the defeat of key regional allies, including the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and the DMK in Tamil Nadu, prompting fresh introspection within opposition ranks. The alliance is expected to discuss a common strategy for upcoming state elections and the 2029 Lok Sabha polls.

TMC is likely to raise the issue of alleged attacks on its leaders in West Bengal and seek support from alliance partners.

Internal tensions are also expected to surface. The CPI(M), represented by Rajya Sabha leader John Brittas, is likely to seek clarification from the Congress over allegations that Left parties had an understanding with the BJP during the Kerala assembly elections. CPI(M) general secretary M A Baby has already written to Kharge, saying such accusations undermine the spirit of opposition unity.

The BJP seized on the differences, with spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla describing the alliance as marked by "confusion, division, allegations and ambition for positions".

Ramesh, however, insisted the alliance remained united despite its diversity. He accused the Modi government of undermining democratic institutions, targeting opposition leaders and hurting livelihoods through inflation and economic policies.

The INDIA alliance was formed ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and last met formally in June 2024. A strategy meeting hosted by Rahul Gandhi in August 2025 focused on electoral issues, including the revision of voter rolls in Bihar. —*PTI*

Eggs hurled at arrested Kolkata TMC councillors

KOLKATA, 7 JUNE

The arrest of two Trinamool Congress councillors' in criminal cases led to dramatic scenes in Kolkata on Sunday.

Councillor Bappaditya Dasgupta in southeast Kolkata and Md Jasimuddin were pelted with eggs by locals.

In Kolkata's Patuli, hundreds gathered outside the police station to protest against Councillor Bappaditya Dasgupta, who was arrested on Saturday, for extortion, criminal trespass, criminal intimidation and attempted arson.

Dasgupta's associate, Sourav Ghosh, was arrested with him.

The case stems from a complaint filed by advocate Paramita Dey, who alleged that Dasgupta demanded Rs 20 lakh from her when she tried to set up a legal chamber at her residence. She eventually paid Rs 2 lakh.

Police were forced to wait for six hours outside the residence of Kolkata Corporation's Ward number 39 Councillor Md Jasimuddin in the College Street area, as he had barricaded himself to avoid arrest.

The standoff ended at noon when police called a locksmith to break open the locks. Moments later, Jasimuddin surrendered.

Jasimuddin was arrested in connection with a POCSO case registered in 2023.

A man was tonsured, garlanded with shoes and paraded in Howrah district. People said the TMC leader used to extort money from welfare scheme beneficiaries. —*PTI*

Vehicle carrying Dasgupta was attacked with eggs —*SCREENGRAB*

Panel probing NEET, OSM issues grills NTA, CBSE

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

A Parliamentary panel has asked the NTA to define what constitutes a "paper leak" and whether any paper leaks have occurred in exams it conducted since 2018, sources said.

The panel's questionnaire follows NTA officials' appearance before it last week, where they contended that there was no paper leak from their system, claiming that some questions from a guess paper were in circulation, sources said.

The Parliamentary Committee for Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, headed by Congress member Digvijaya Singh, is investigating the NEET paper leak issue and the CBSE on-screen marking system (OSM) row, having summoned top government officials including those from the NTA and CBSE.

The committee has sought written answers from the CBSE and the NTA on issues of OSM system and the NEET exam, respectively.

The panel asked the NTA whether it conducted any inquiry into the allegations of irregularities in the NEET-UG 2024 paper (outside CBI investigations). The panel also asked the NTA about its staff strength for the last three years and fresh recruitments after 2022. It also demanded the annual report the NTA submitted to the Higher Education Department for the last three years.

It sought a detailed report on each of the Radhakrishnan Committee Report's 101 recommendations and the action taken by the NTA on each, the sources said. — *PTI*

The panel asked the NTA whether it conducted any inquiry into the allegations of irregularities in the NEET-UG paper leak —*PTI*

> **Modi ji wants our youth to keep making reels and frying pakodas, without asking questions or opening their eyes**
>
> -Rahul Gandhi, Cong leader on CBSE OSM row

TVK govt may not last even three months, claims DMK leader Stalin

CHENNAI, 7 JUNE

DMK president MK Stalin on Sunday claimed that the TVK government in Tamil Nadu, headed by Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay, may not survive beyond three months. Vijay was sworn in as the CM of Tamil Nadu in May, ushering in the first non-DMK, non-AIADMK government in the state in 60 years.

Speaking at an event where former VCK MLA Panaiyur Babu and his supporters joined the DMK, the former CM said, "Many people are already talking about it, and criticism is mounting. The question now is whether this government will last even three months".

DMK SERVES TVK MLA DEFEMATION NOTICE

The DMK served a legal notice on TVK MLA representing the Thiru Vi Ka Nagar Constituency, MR Pallavi, demanding an unconditional apology for allegedly making and broadcasting "reckless and defamatory" statements against the opposition party members. The notice further noted her allegation that TVK workers in the Royapuram Constituency had discovered DMK members using money and influence to deliberately engineer the power failures.

The controversy stems from a video interview given by the TVK party leader Pallavi to a local channel, which was subsequently published on their YouTube channel and widely circulated across various social media platforms. —*PTI*

Actor Raghava Lawrence fuels political entry buzz

Actor-choreographer-filmmaker Raghava Lawrence on Sunday addressed speculation about his possible entry into politics and a potential contest in the upcoming Tiruchirappalli East by-election, saying he would make a "major announcement" on 11 June. A by-election to the Tiruchirappalli East Assembly constituency in Tamil Nadu became necessary after Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay vacated the seat. "News about me contesting the Trichy East by-election has been circulating across various media platforms," Lawrence said, adding that he had been receiving numerous requests for clarification from journalists. The actor said the scale of the speculation prompted him to issue a statement. —*PTI*

HC DENIES BAIL TO RAZA IN UP VIOLENCE CASE

PRAYAGRAJ, 7 JUNE

The Allahabad High Court has rejected the bail plea of Tauqeer Raza Khan, accused of masterminding the 2025 Bareilly violence, observing that his release could threaten communal harmony.

Justice Arun Kumar Singh Deshwal, in an order dated 5 June, said evidence, including eyewitness accounts and video footage, indicated that Khan delivered a provocative speech urging Muslim youths to gather at Islamia Inter College despite prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the BNSS.

According to the prosecution, the crowd later engaged in arson, stone-pelting, petrol bomb attacks and vandalism, injuring several police personnel. The FIR also alleged that acid bottles and gunshots were used during the violence.

The court held that he could be held liable as the main conspirator. —*PTI*

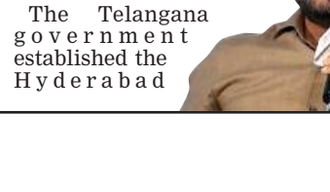
India, Indonesia eye defence, semiconductor ties

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

India and Indonesia on Sunday explored ways to deepen cooperation in a range of strategic sectors, including defence, semiconductors, maritime trade, investments, pharmaceuticals and food security, during wide-ranging talks between External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono.

The discussions were held as part of the eighth India-Indonesia Joint Commission Meeting during Sugiono's three-day visit to New Delhi.

Jaishankar said the India-Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership had witnessed strong growth in recent years. The two sides held substantive discussions on political, defence and security cooperation, maritime affairs and shipping, trade, fintech, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, fertilisers, critical minerals, tourism, education and cultural exchanges.



The ministers also exchanged views on regional developments, strengthening multilateral coordination and deepening India-ASEAN ties. They are also understood to have discussed the economic implications of the ongoing West Asia crisis. MEA said the two leaders explored opportunities in trade and investment, digital technologies, energy, connectivity, space, education, and consular affair —*PTI*

DURING SIR

EC to give info of 'foreigners' to authorities

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

The Election Commission of India has directed its state poll machinery to refer cases of "suspected foreign nationals" to competent authorities during the special intensive revision of voters' list.

The EC also underlined that for electors whose enumeration forms have not returned, BLOs would identify a probable cause, such as absent, shifted, dead and duplicate entry based on inquiry with nearby electors and would note the same.

In instructions circulated on 14 May to state chief electoral officers on procedure to be followed while holding SIR, the poll authority said, "Electoral registration officers (EROs) will refer cases of suspected foreigners to the competent authority under the Citizenship Act, 1955. For these purposes, assistant EROs shall exercise ERO's powers independently..."

As the EC was preparing for SIR in Bihar last year, its officials had claimed that several nationals from Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar were found by its grassroots functionaries.

But eventually, the poll authority did not share any numbers or proof of such people who were not eligible to be on the voters' list.

Opposition parties had dubbed the EC's claims as a ploy to carry out SIR to target electors not aligned to the BJP.

On 14 May, the poll authority had launched phase III of SIR in 16 states and three Union Territories involving 36.73 crore voters beginning May 30.

The states and UTs are Delhi, Odisha, Mizoram, Sikkim, Manipur, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Telangana, Punjab, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Tripura, Dadar and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. — *PTI*

As the EC was preparing for SIR in Bihar, its officials claimed that nationals from Bangladesh were found by its grassroots functionaries —*PTI*

Revanth's Hitler-HYDRAA remark sparks political row

HYDERABAD, 7 JUNE

Telangana Chief Minister **A Revanth Reddy** sparked a political row after remarking that he drew inspiration from Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler while naming HYDRAA, drawing strong criticism from the BRS and the BJP.

Speaking at an event in Bengaluru on Saturday, Reddy said, "Hydra, the word is Hitler's favourite word. His core team was called Hydra, who can assassinate anyone. So, I have taken inspiration from Hitler". The Chief Minister said he established the organisation with its Commissioner.

The Telangana government established the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) in July 2024. The agency has been removing encroachments and has demolishing alleged illegal structures.

Reacting to the remarks, the BRS described Revanth Reddy as the "new Hitler" in a post on X, alleging that homes of lakhs of poor people had been demolished.

Union Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy commented, "Revanth Reddy, now openly boasting that Hitler inspired him to create HYDRAA and is comparing his demolitions in Hyderabad to those in war-torn countries like Iran and Israel, echoing his leader Rahul Gandhi's language." —*PTI*

— PTI

Monsoon delayed in M'rashtra, farmers cautioned

MUMBAI, 7 JUNE

Maharashtra is unlikely to see adequate monsoon rains before 15 June, prompting authorities to advise farmers against rushing into sowing. Weather forecasts indicate subdued rainfall activity and slow monsoon progression across the state. While the southwest monsoon has entered south Konkan, bringing moderate to heavy rains in Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri districts until 9 June, the overall pattern remains weak over the next week. The Agriculture Department said Vidarbha, Marathwada, Khandesh, and Madhya Maharashtra may see scattered thunderstorms and rain, but these are unlikely to support sowing. —*PTI*

Toxic fumes from Surat septic tank kill 4 workers

SURAT, 7 JUNE

Four workers died after inhaling toxic fumes while cleaning a septic tank at a jewellery manufacturing unit in Surat, Gujarat, on Sunday. DCP, Zone-1, Alok Kumar, said asphyxiation is likely the cause. The incident occurred at the Ashwini Kumar area in a septic tank that collects waste from jewellery cleaning, which undergoes bi-monthly cleaning. The supervisor and three labourers entered the tank and collapsed due to poisonous gases. The supervisor had called fire department before entering, but findings suggest safety protocols were not followed, including providing safety gadgets. —*PTI*

Over 500 R'sthan farmer deaths linked to pesticides

JAIPUR, 7 JUNE

As many as 535 farmers died of consuming pesticides in Rajasthan between January 2024 and January 2026, the agriculture department revealed in a written reply to a legislative question. The department provided Rs 5.10 crore in assistance to the families of the deceased under the chief minister's farmer welfare scheme. The report states that unsafe pesticide use, failure to follow safety measures, and indiscriminate application have contributed to farmer illnesses and deaths. District-wise, Bikaner recorded 57 deaths, Churu 56, Hanumangarh 42, and Jhalawar 42, among others. No deaths were reported in Dholpur, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Sirohi, Banswara, Dungarpur, or Salumar. The department tested 5,521 samples, with 189 found substandard, and took action against violators. —*PTI*

— PTI

TN makes physical edu mandatory in schools

CHENNAI, 7 JUNE

The Tamil Nadu government has mandated physical education for all students from Class six to 12 in both government and private schools from this academic year. The School Education department issued detailed guidelines following reports that many private schools failed to conduct physical education classes, instead using those periods for special classes. An official said, "All district physical education inspectors have been instructed to report schools with unused playgrounds." The guidelines also recommend extra training after school hours for interested students and identification of schools that have succeeded in state or national competitions. —*PTI*

Protests to continue till Pradhan quits: CJP's Dipke

Says BJP must end Hindu-Muslim politics, focus on jobs

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 7 JUNE

Members of the Cockroach Janta Party led by Abhijeet Dipke protest at New Delhi's Jantar Mantar on Saturday demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan—*PTI*

Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke said they will continue protests till Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan quits. He also said that the BJP must stop playing Hindu-Muslim politics and focus on solving the unemployment problem.

Meanwhile, the police beefed up security at the residence of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke, who reached his home in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district on Sunday, an official said.

After landing in New Delhi from the US on Saturday morning, Dipke participated in a protest at Jantar Mantar, demanding Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation over alleged irregularities in examinations.

The CJP, is a youth-led online movement which has been demanding accountability in examinations like NEET, CBSE, CUET, and SSC.

Dipke reached Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar on Sunday, and his family welcomed him at his residence in the MIDC Waluj area.

"We have increased security at his residence from today. Earlier, 11 policemen were deployed there, now it is 15," an official from MIDC Waluj police station said.

On Saturday, hundreds of protesters gathered at Delhi's Jantar Mantar under the CJP banner, demanding Pradhan's resignation over alleged irregularities in examinations, with Dipke saying not to get "scared."

CJP spokespersons said that they will wait for a week either for the Centre to sack Pradhan or for him to quit, after which they would launch a countrywide protest.

Protesters, armed with posters demanding Pradhan's resignation, were seen wearing cockroach masks.

Besides demanding the education minister's resignation, the protesters also raised slogans demanding that the BJP end its "Hindu-Muslim" politics. Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, CPI(ML) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya, CPI's Annie Raja and activists from Left organisations attended the protest. — *PTI*

Senior officials in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said the fact sheets represent only the first stage of dissemination—*AI*

All NFHS indicators being surveyed: Govt

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Union health ministry sources said the indicators claimed to have been "omitted" in the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-6 Fact Sheets are being monitored through dedicated national surveys and administrative databases, and therefore were not duplicated in the preliminary release. Senior officials in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said the fact sheets represent only the first stage of dissemination and cover 101 major indicators intended to provide a concise snapshot of India's most critical health and demographic trends.

It will be released subsequently with a wider range of indicators, they added.

Responding to concerns over the absence of some indicators, officials said the objective was to improve coherence across India's expanding statistical ecosystem.

Sanitation and clean cooking fuel coverage, for instance, are tracked through specialised surveys and administrative platforms such as Swachh Survekshan Grameen and surveys conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, making duplication within the fact sheets unnecessary they said.

Similarly, statistics about mortality, birth registration and population characteristics continue to be generated through systems like the Sample Registration System (SRS), Civil Registration System (CRS) and Census framework.

Congress President Kharge had claimed on Thursday that the "absolute incompetence" of the BJP has been "unmasked" by the NFHS-6 data.

Union Health Minister JP Nadda hit back at Kharge on Saturday, asserting that the latest data reflects significant improvements in India's healthcare indicators under the Modi government. — *PTI*

Delhi to Siliguri in six hours? WB to get its first bullet train

KOLKATA, 7 JUNE

This Delhi-Siliguri bullet train will be India's second hi-speed rail project after the 508 km Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor—*ANI*

Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said a bullet train would connect Delhi and Siliguri, the gateway to the northeast.

He said it would reduce travel time to just six hours from 20 hours. This will be India's second bullet train project after the 508 km Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor.

"A bullet train project will come to West Bengal. It will connect Delhi and Siliguri via Lucknow, Varanasi and Patna," the Union Minister said on Saturday.

Vaishnaw, who visited Kolkata praised Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari for the election win and for "saving Bengal" from the Trinamool Congress, which he accused of delaying projects. The minister asserted that railway projects worth more than Rs 1 lakh crore were currently underway in the state.

Suvendu, who accompanied Vaishnaw, said the government would work closely with the Centre to accelerate pending railway projects.

"Just as we have provided land to the BSF to strengthen border security, we will similarly provide land to the Railways for projects across West Bengal," the Bengal CM said.

Vaishnaw said 102 stations in Bengal were being redeveloped under the Amrit Bharat scheme.

Vaishnaw accused the TMC government of delaying several railway and metro projects. He cited the metro project at Chingrighata, where work on a key stretch was delayed due to court battles.

Vaishnaw pointed out that Kolkata Metro, India's first metro rail system, added only 28 km in the 42 years between 1972 and 2014. — *PTI*

Farmers protest halts land acquisition for Gadchiroli projects

GADCHIROLI, 7 JUNE

The land acquisition process for a proposed airport and industrial projects in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, has been temporarily halted following a protest by over 3,000 farmers at the district collectorate.

The farmers, who have been staging a sit-in for several days, claim their fertile lands are being acquired for projects in Charmorshi. The Maharashtra government, on 12 May, 2026, sanctioned approximately Rs 104 crore to acquire 311.81 hectares of land across Shirapur Chak, Guruvala, Hirapur, and Rakhi villages.

They allege that the government issued direct orders without landowner consent, which they find unjust and demanded revocation of the orders. Several acres in five villages will be taken for the airport, while 14 villages face land acquisition for JSW Group's steel plant, and 13 villages for Lloyds Metals project. — *PTI*

Four-year-old dies of Shigella in Kerala; govt ups surveillance

T'PURAM, 7 JUNE

Kerala Health Minister K Muraleedharan said on Sunday that the government had intensified surveillance and preventive measures after a four-year-old child died of Shigella infection in Kozhikode, marking the first reported fatality from the disease in the state.

Addressing a press conference here, he said three children had been admitted to Kozhikode Medical College Hospital with the infection.

While two recovered and were discharged, a four-year-old girl, Nila from Thalakkulathur, died on Saturday.

Muraleedharan said Shigella is a bacterial infection that affects the intestines and causes diarrhoea, fever and abdominal pain.

"The disease mainly spreads through contaminated food and water," he said.

Muraleedharan said around 123 cases were reported in Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta districts last week.

Amid concerns over reports of gastrointestinal illness among students in Wayanad, he said investigations indicated that the cases were not linked to Shigella. — *PTI*

Fire audit finds flaws at Patna Khan Global Studies

PATNA, 7 JUNE

Bihar Police found several structural deficiencies at Khan Global Studies (KGS) building in Patna during a fire audit and said notice will be issued to the institute for rectifying the shortcomings within a week, officials said.

The audit was conducted days after a fire at a private hospital in Muzaffarpur district claimed at least seven lives.

KGS is a Patna-based coaching institute founded by educator Faisal Khan, popularly known as Khan Sir, and is known for preparing students for competitive and government recruitment examinations

Assistant district fire officer Ajay Kumar Sharma told reporters that problems were found in the fire alarm system, while a fire pump had not been installed. The capacity of the overhead water tank was also inadequate, and there was no fixed fire fighting system, he added.

Despite repeated attempts by the media, officials of KGS could not be reached for comment. — *PTI*

Meghalaya village protests against border fence

PYNURSLA, 7 JUNE

Residents of a village along the India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya held a demonstration on Sunday demanding that the fencing should be done along the zero line, or else they would get cut off from the rest of the country.

Located on the zero line in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district, Lyngkhong is one of the few villages where homes stand just metres from a settlement in Bangladesh. According to international convention, fencing has to be at least 150 yards from the zero line.

Locals say the village had been separated from Bangladesh largely by a bamboo fence erected by villagers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and nothing has changed much.

BSF personnel patrol the India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills —*ANI*

On Sunday, they staged a protest and submitted a memorandum to the sub-divisional officer (SDO) of Pynursla, seeking immediate halt to fencing.

"We are not against fencing, but we want the fence to be erected on the zero line so that our village remains inside India," village head Ramu told PTI.

Officials said construction of the border fence is continuing to secure the India-Bangladesh frontier.

Meghalaya has a 444 km border with Bangladesh, less than 80 km of which remains unfenced.

A senior BSF official said an outpost has already been established in Lyngkhong to provide security to residents.

A Home Department official said India has taken up with Bangladesh the issue of constructing a single-row fence along the zero line in areas where human settlements are likely to be affected. — *PTI*

STATE HONOURS FOR LAST RITE

Salim turned cine dialogues into Keralites' vocabulary

KOCHI, 7 JUNE

Actor Salim Kumar, who died here while undergoing treatment for pneumonia, was a celebrated artiste whose comedy dialogues transcended cinema screens to become an integral part of everyday conversations among Malayalees, helping audience laugh through life's anxieties.

For over two decades, his punchlines, expressions and quirky characters found a place not only in theatres but also in homes, workplaces, college campuses and tea shops across the state.

Long before memes and social media popularised film dialogues as cultural currency, Salim Kumar's lines had already entered common parlance. Whether it was a moment of confusion, disappointment, self-mockery or comic relief, Malayalis often found a Salim dialogue that captured the situation. Many of his memorable lines continue to be quoted years after the films were released.

The National Award-winning actor, who was 56, rose from Kerala's mimicry circuit. At the peak of his career in the early 2000s, he delivered memorable performances in comedies like 'Thenkasipattanam,' 'Meesa Madhavan,' 'Kalyanaraman,' 'Thilakkam,' 'Pulival Kalyanam,' 'CID Moosa', 'Pandippada,' 'Chathikkatha Chanthu' and 'Hello.'

Salim Kumar was also known for his longstanding association with the Congress.

Residents of North Paravur remembered Salim Kumar's generosity during the devastating Kerala floods of 2018. Locals recalled how Salim had opened the doors of his residence, Laughing Villa, to people when waters inundated the area in August 2018. — *PTI*

Man dead, woman hospitalised while attending music event

MUMBAI, 7 JUNE

A 28-year-old man died while a woman was hospitalised during the 'Klangkuenstler All Night Long' musical show organised at NSCI Dome in Worli in Mumbai in the early hours of Sunday. Police said that no evidence of any kind of drug use was found, and added that the cause was excessive consumption of alcohol.

The man was rushed to Breach Candy hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival, a police official said. Dehydration may have contributed to the man's death, and further medical examination is on, he added.

In the other incident, a 31-year-old woman complained of ill health at the event and was taken to Jaslok Hospital, and is currently stable, the official informed. The

woman has told police she consumed alcohol along with some energy drinks, he added.

An accidental death report has been registered at Tardeo police station, he said.

In April this year, two MBA students who attended a music concert at NESCO Exhibition Centre in Mumbai's Goregaon area died allegedly due to a drug overdose. Police later arrested multiple persons in connection with the case. —*PTI*

Farmers in M'rashtra seek Rs 3K support price for onions

NASHIK, 7 JUNE

Farmers in Maharashtra have welcomed the Centre's move to relax onion procurement norms but continue to demand a support price of Rs 3,000 per quintal.

They criticise the current procurement rate of around Rs 1,580 per quintal offered by NAFED and NCCF, deeming it insufficient to cover cultivation costs.

Farmers argue that the relaxed norms — raising acceptable size from 45-65mm to 35-70mm and easing blemish regulations — are helpful but do little to address low prices. Maharashtra Onion Growers Association leader Jaydeep Bhadane said, "Norms have been relaxed, but farmers are still incurring losses," emphasising the need for higher prices. —*PTI*

Disease threatens mango exports amid Japan ban

A farmer places protective bags over growing mangoes in Nadia district, West Bengal, to shield the fruit from excessive heat and insect damage. Exporters in Malda said a significant portion of this season's Himsagar mango crop has developed dark spots —*PTI*

Dark spots caused by a weather-induced disease have cast uncertainty over exports of West Bengal's prized Himsagar mangoes, dealing a fresh blow to India's mango industry already grappling with a Japanese import ban, climate-related crop damage and rising logistics costs.

Exporters in Malda, one of the country's leading mango-producing districts, said a significant portion of this season's bagged Himsagar crop has developed dark spots, making the fruit unsuitable for premium export markets and organised retail chains.

The problem has emerged at a critical time when exporters and state officials were aiming for a sharp increase in mango exports from the district.

According to exporters, continuous rainfall during the fruit bagging stage, followed by high temperatures, created favourable conditions for disease development.

Bagging, a technique in which individual fruits are covered while still on the tree, is widely used to improve appearance and protect mangoes from pests and diseases. The method has been heavily promoted in Malda as part of efforts to meet international quality standards.

Prasun Chitlangia, co-founder of Shrishti Food Products, said a planned one-tonne shipment of Himsagar mangoes to the United States had to be put on hold.

"We were supposed to send the first consignment of mangoes to the US this week. We feared dark spots on the fruits, and it has come true. Had we exported the consignment, it would have been rejected by the importer as fruits have to be free of spots, which are an early sign of disease," he said.

Chitlangia said the situation was worrying given the large number of export orders already received.

The setback comes despite ambitious targets to increase mango and litchi exports from Malda to more than 300 metric tonnes this season. Exporters had earlier estimated overseas shipments could reach between 300 and 500 metric tonnes, compared with only around 15 metric tonnes exported to five countries last year.

However, industry representatives remain cautiously optimistic.

Malda Mango Merchants Association president Ujjal Saha said reports indicated disease in around 15 per cent of bagged fruits, leaving a substantial quantity still suitable for export.

"Nearly three lakh more bagged mangoes are available and can be exported. Orders for Himsagar mangoes continue to remain strong," Saha said.

The West Bengal horticulture department and exporters have spent the past several years promoting export-oriented cultivation through fruit bagging, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), scientific harvesting and improved post-harvest handling.

Officials distributed around 2.5 lakh fruit bags among growers this season and monitored 50 to 60 orchards following export-compliant cultivation methods.

The export basket was expected to include premium varieties such as Himsagar, Langra, Lakshman Bhog and Amrapali, along with litchis from Malda and neighbouring Murshidabad district.

Despite the disease outbreak, exporters said international demand for premium Bengal mangoes remains robust, and efforts are continuing to source export-quality fruit from unaffected orchards.

JAPAN BAN DEEPENS CONCERNS

The difficulties facing Bengal exporters come amid wider challenges for India's mango export sector.

Japan has suspended fresh mango imports from India for the 2026 season after inspectors identified shortcomings in pest-control and disinfection procedures at Indian Vapour Heat Treatment (VHT) facilities during inspections conducted in March.

The suspension affects premium Indian varieties including Alphonso, Kesar, Langra, Chausa and Banganapalli.

Under the restrictions, shipments accompanied by phytosanitary inspection certificates issued on or after 25 March, 2026, are liable to be rejected, returned or destroyed upon arrival.

The move marks the first major restriction imposed by Japan on Indian mangoes in nearly two decades. Japan had previously banned Indian mango imports in 1986 due to concerns over fruit flies, with the restriction remaining in place until 2006.

Japanese quarantine authorities, tasked with preventing the spread of invasive pests such as the Oriental fruit fly, reportedly found deficiencies in disinfection and fumigation procedures at India's approved export facilities, including the VHT centre at Rehmanpur in Uttar Pradesh.

Imports will remain suspended until India investigates the lapses, submits corrective measures and satisfies Japanese authorities that export protocols are being properly implemented.

Although Japan accounts for a relatively small share of India's mango exports, industry leaders regard it as an important premium market because of the high prices paid for fruit meeting its stringent quality standards.

According to export data cited by industry sources, India exported nearly 30,000 tonnes of mangoes worth approximately US$56.5 million during the 2024-25 financial year. Exports of fresh and processed mangoes to Japan were valued at around US$1.54 million, with Gujarat's Kesar variety accounting for a significant share.

The sector is also facing additional headwinds. Heatwave conditions in Maharashtra's Konkan region reportedly affected this year's Alphonso crop, while exporters continue to struggle with rising freight rates, shipping delays and container shortages linked to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

BRIGHT SPOT FROM JHARKHAND

Amid the challenges, exporters have received some encouraging news.

The Commerce Ministry on Sunday announced that India had exported 1.5 tonnes of fresh Amrapali mangoes from Jharkhand to the United Kingdom.

The consignment was sourced from Beura Farmer Producer Company Ltd, an all-women Farmer Producer Company based in Bano block of Simdega district.

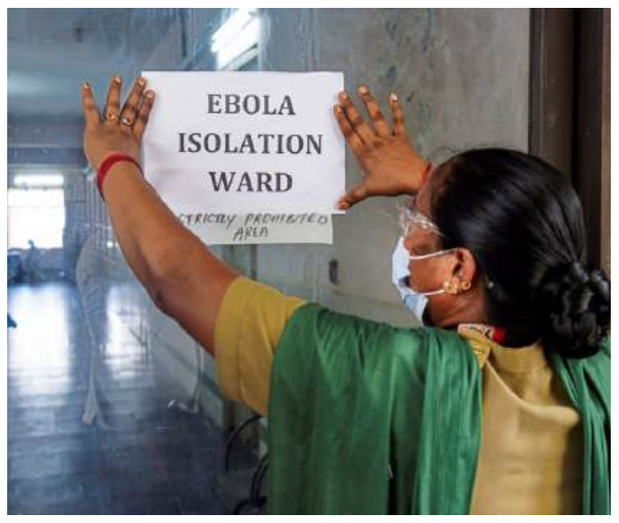
The shipment was dispatched from Kolkata on 4 June, highlighting efforts to diversify India's mango export base and bring smaller producer groups into international markets.

While disease outbreaks, trade restrictions and logistical challenges continue to test the sector, exporters remain hopeful that strong global demand for premium Indian mangoes will help sustain export growth in the months ahead.

—Salar News with Agencies

SALAR

Ebola outbreak raises global alarm as cases rise



A health worker pastes an Ebola Isolation Ward sign on a glass door, at Gandhi Hospital, in Hyderabad, Telangana —*PTI*

The latest Ebola outbreak is showing little sign of slowing, prompting growing international concern as cases rise in Central Africa and health authorities monitor suspected infections across multiple continents.

On 24 April, the first suspected case of the rare Bundibugyo strain of Ebola was detected in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Less than a month later, on 17 May, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

As of 27 May, the DRC had recorded 906 suspected cases and 223 deaths, making the current outbreak the third-largest Ebola epidemic ever documented.

Health officials are also investigating possible cases beyond Africa. Authorities in Italy are monitoring a traveller who recently returned from the DRC, while Brazil has investigated two suspected cases involving travellers arriving from the DRC and Uganda. An American aid worker who contracted Ebola while working in the DRC is currently receiving treatment in Germany.

In response to the escalating crisis, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations has committed more than A$86 million to accelerate the development of three vaccine candidates targeting the Bundibugyo strain.

A DEADLY BUT PREVENTABLE DISEASE

Ebola is a rare but often fatal viral disease that spreads primarily through direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected individuals, including blood, vomit and faeces.

Early symptoms typically include fever, headache, sore throat, fatigue and muscle pain. In severe cases, patients may develop skin rashes, breathing difficulties, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain and seizures.

The virus was first identified in humans in 1976. Since then, more than 40 outbreaks have occurred worldwide, most of them in Africa.

The current outbreak is only the third caused by the relatively rare Bundibugyo strain. Most previous outbreaks were linked to the more lethal Zaire strain, which can kill up to 90 per cent of infected individuals. By comparison, the Bundibugyo strain has a mortality rate of up to 34 per cent.

WHY IS THE OUTBREAK SPREADING?

Experts say several factors driving the current outbreak mirror those seen during the devastating West African Ebola epidemic of 2014–16, which claimed more than 11,000 lives.

In both outbreaks, the virus circulated for months before health authorities officially declared an emergency. Early cases often presented with non-specific symptoms, making detection difficult.

Rapid spread in densely populated urban centres has also fuelled transmission. Healthcare facilities have become hotspots for infection, particularly where resources are stretched and infection-control measures are inadequate.

Political instability and social unrest have further complicated containment efforts. In parts of the DRC, angry crowds have reportedly set fire to hospital tents, forcing some patients to flee isolation wards.

Traditional burial practices, which may involve direct contact with the bodies of the deceased, have also contributed to transmission.

CASES CROSS BORDERS

The outbreak has already spread beyond the DRC's borders.

Uganda, which shares a border with the DRC, has reported nine cases and one death linked to the outbreak.

The American patient now being treated in Germany contracted the virus while working in the DRC and is reported to be in a stable condition.

Meanwhile, health authorities in Italy are monitoring a traveller who recently returned to the city of Cagliari from the DRC.

Brazil has also investigated two suspected cases. One traveller returning to São Paulo from the DRC was initially feared to have Ebola but was later diagnosed with severe meningitis. A second traveller who arrived in Rio de Janeiro from Uganda tested positive for malaria and subsequently tested negative for Ebola.

Although no Ebola cases have been confirmed in Brazil, the country has activated emergency protocols, including patient isolation, laboratory testing and epidemiological investigations.

INDIA'S PREPAREDNESS

India has never recorded a confirmed case of Ebola Virus Disease.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has confirmed that no positive cases have been detected despite several travellers being tested in recent months.

Among the recent cases investigated was an African national in Bengaluru, as well as individuals in Chhattisgarh and Gujarat. All were isolated for the standard 21-day monitoring period, and laboratory tests conducted by the National Institute of Virology returned negative results.

Two individuals who arrived in Hyderabad, Telangana, after travelling through Uganda were also isolated at Gandhi Hospital. Both later tested negative for Ebola. Health authorities clarified that the individuals were Sudanese nationals, one of whom was a student.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Several countries have introduced precautionary measures to prevent the virus from spreading further. The United States and Canada have temporarily restricted entry for travellers from the DRC, Uganda and South Sudan. Other nations, including India and Mexico, have strengthened airport screening and disease surveillance measures. Some governments have also imposed 21-day quarantine requirements for returning travellers. *—PTI*

LETTERS

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As Xi visits N Korea, Kim looks to China for economic support

China's Xi Jinping is travelling to North Korea for the first time in nearly seven years in a trip that offers North Korean leader Kim Jong Un a stage to showcase an increasingly assertive foreign policy anchored by closer ties with his country's former Cold War allies.

China, the North's economic pipeline, is expected to reassert its influence over a traditionally allied government that has grown closer to Russia in recent times.

The meeting between the two leaders is their first since Kim travelled to Beijing for a World War II event in September 2025.

Here is a look at what they may be seeking from their upcoming meeting:

WHAT KIM WANTS

After years of prioritising Russia — dispatching thousands of troops and munitions to support Moscow's invasion of Ukraine — North Korea's leader is now seeking stronger ties with China to break further out of isolation, embracing the idea of a "new Cold War" and projecting Pyongyang as part of a united front against Washington.

Since the era of its previous leaders, North Korea has long maintained an "equidistance" approach toward Beijing and Moscow, playing its two main benefactors against each other to maximise its gains.

While he is receiving crucial support from Russia for backing its war effort, likely including military technologies and aid, Kim cannot fulfil his promise to improve the living standards of his populace without greater economic assistance from China, according to Koh Yu-hwan, a former president of Seoul's Institute of National Unification.

"North Korea vows to maintain a self-reliant economic system and focus on advancing its nuclear capabilities, but in reality it's nearly impossible to raise living standards by mobilizing internal resources alone," Koh said.

The Kim-Xi meeting could include discussions on resuming Chinese tourism to North Korea and opening a bridge over the Yalu River that has remained unused years after its completion, Koh said. The leaders could also discuss joint economic development projects in border regions shared by North Korea, China and Russia.

It remains to be seen whether Kim at some point will use his increased diplomatic footing to reengage with Washington after his talks with US President Donald Trump collapsed in 2019 over disagreements about sanctions on North Korea.

China's Xi Jinping is travelling to North Korea for the first time in 7 years in a trip that offers Kim Jong Un a stage to showcase an increasingly assertive foreign policy anchored by closer ties with his country's ex-Cold War allies —*ANI*

Pyongyang has so far rebuffed Trump's offers to resume talks after the American president entered his second term, insisting that Washington first drop its demand for North Korea's denuclearisation as a precondition for negotiations.

Kim also met Xi before travelling to Singapore and Vietnam for his summits with Trump in 2018 and 2019, moves widely interpreted as efforts to bolster his bargaining position.

"From North Korea's perspective, there's belief that having China's backing provides a sense of security and confidence when seeking to improve relations with the United States," said Park Won Gon, a professor at Seoul's Ewha University.

WHAT XI WANTS

For China, the visit is a chance to bring back a traditional ally closer into its orbit, by offering possible economic incentives and food aid, traditional assets it has given to North Korea.

"I think the Chinese are privately a little uneasy at the embrace of Kim Jong Un and Vladimir Putin, that the North Koreans have really gravitated towards the Russians. Part of Xi Jinping's goal is to correct the balance," said Mike Chinoy, a former CNN journalist and author of an upcoming book about the insular country.

Xi is making his first overseas trip in 2026 after become increasingly selective about making state visits since the pandemic. Coming on the heels of separately hosting both Trump and Putin, the choice is strategic.

"The trip ensures no one can reshape the peninsula's security architecture without his concurrence," Seong-Hyon Lee, a senior fellow at the George HW Bush Foundation for US-China Relations, said.

Beijing is also realistic in response to Kim's clear nuclear ambitions.

In April, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Pyongyang and met with Kim. Observers noted the absence of the word "denuclearisation" from the statement on the visit, a departure from the standard line that China usually deploys which calls for denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

"The most telling sign of the visit may be a silence: if China's official readout omits the word denuclearisation,' Beijing has effectively accepted North Korea as a nuclear state, folding the issue into its broader buffer strategy against the US," said Lee.

In exchange, China could seek greater access to the estuary of the Tumen River, which forms part of the border between the two countries, and navigational rights in waters off the Korean Peninsula's east coast.

Ultimately Kim is likely to give Xi a grand and lavish welcome at the symbolic level, but China may not be able to extract much from an increasingly confident Kim, experts say.

"He's going to give Xi Jinping a welcome befitting of the head of state of their giant neighbour, but he's not going to play the pliant little brother,'" said Chinoy. *—PTI*

Pak sends letter to Mojtaba as talks stall

Naqvi lands in Tehran; Lebanon army head flies to Pak; Trump says troops to stay until deal

TEHRAN, 7 JUNE

Pakistan's Interior Minister Mosin Naqvi was in Tehran on Sunday in a fresh bid to restart negotiations between Iran and the US, with diplomatic talks appearing to stall and strikes and counter-strikes resurging.

Naqvi delivered a message to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei from Pakistan's Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, according to Iranian state-run IRNA news agency.

Mojtaba has not been seen in public since he was named the Islamic Republic's ruler after his father Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed on the first day of the war on 28 February when the US and Israel launched a bombardment campaign against Iran.

Naqvi met with Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni late Saturday, and held talks Sunday morning with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

There were no details on the contents of the message. Pakistani authorities have said Islamabad, with support from regional countries including Qatar, Turkey and Egypt, has been working to help bridge differences between the United States and Iran and encourage efforts aimed at reducing tensions and ensuring the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Pakistan Interior Minister Mosin Naqvi hands a letter for Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei from Army Chief Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Iran FM Abbas Araghchi, in Tehran, on Sunday —*IRNA*

Notably, this comes as Lebanon's Army Chief Gen Rodolphe Haykal left for Pakistan on Saturday on an official visit amid continued Israeli attacks on Lebanon and ongoing Pakistani mediation efforts between Iran and the US. He was invited by Munir.

Iran has stressed that it would only sign a deal if fighting ended on all fronts – including Lebanon.

However, US President Donald Trump said on NBC's 'Meet the Press' that he wants to see more "surgical" attacks against the militant Hezbollah. The interview was recorded on Friday and broadcast on Sunday.

"I'd like to see Lebanon have a better life. I'd like to see a more surgical attack on Hezbollah. I think it should be more surgical," Trump said, according to a transcript of the interview.

He added that the US and Iran were close to a deal.

Trump said the US will seize and destroy Iran's highly enriched uranium, either with or without Tehran.

"We'll take it out and destroy it, whether it's on-site or whether we take it off-site," he said.

He said that US troops would stay in the Middle East until "completion", stating he doesn't "consider them in danger". —*Agencies*

Amid Don-Bibi rift, Pentagon warns of Israeli espionage

WASHINGTON, 7 JUNE

The Pentagon's intelligence arm has raised the assessed threat level on Israeli spying from "high" to the highest "critical" in recent weeks, according to US media, amid a rift between US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Sources told NBC that the Pentagon's Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) had raised the alert level amid fears that Israel is increasingly attempting to surveil top US officials. The aim is allegedly to understand internal White House deliberations about ending the war.

The DIA disseminated an internal notice accompanied by a seven-page assessment document outlining concerns about Israel's intelligence-gathering capabilities.

One of the officials said that the memo concluded that Israel had the capacity for both human and technological espionage. The internal document also lists several instances that fuelled the heightened concern, though officials said they were not aware of any singular flashpoint.

This comes as Tump confirmed that he yelled at Netanyahu. Trump is reportedly seeking to end the conflict, while Netanyahu seeks to continue the war. —*ANI*

'US wants Iranian assets for the Gulf'

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent is planning to use frozen Iranian assets to help Gulf allies rebuild their losses sustained during the war, sources told CBS News. Iran has sought $24 billion worth of the assets to be released in any deal with the US. However, the Treasury Department is "intends to utilise all available authorities" to use the assets and Bessent has instructed officials to obtain detailed financial projections from partner nation and a legal workaround.

'US cos benefit from Hormuz closure'

Rosneft Chief Executive Igor Sechin said at the St Petersburgh International Economic Forum on Saturday that US energy companies were the main beneficiaries of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. "The closure... is an attempt to reshape global energy market regulations to benefit the US," said Sechin, one of the most influential voices in Russia's energy sector. "The main beneficiaries were American companies, which gained non-competitive advantages and the ability to secure high-cost supplies."

Iran bins Don's offer to meet Mojtaba

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has dismissed a possible meeting between Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei and US President Donald Trump. "I saw a report which said that he (Trump) had stated that he was ready for a meeting or that he wanted to hold a meeting. I think we should be realistic and think and live in the real world," Araghchi said in a media interview. Trump had said he may meet "gay Ayatollah" Mojtaba after a deal was signed.

Shooter wounds 12 near Ohio music festival

TOLEDO, 7 JUNE

A shooting near the Old West End Festival in Toledo wounded at least 12 people, with two in critical condition. Police said it appeared at least two individuals were firing weapons, "probably shooting at each other." The incident caused crowds to scramble for cover, with videos showing people running as gunshots rang out. Kevin Berry, a festival attendee with Navy medical training, described hearing gunfire and seeing a gun tossed nearby. He also noted at least five victims with gunshot wounds in the arboretum area. The Toledo Police Department is actively searching for those responsible. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine expressed concern, stating, "Summer festivals should be safe spaces for families to spend time together without fear of violence." —*PTI*

—*ANI*

Raul makes 1st public appearance after US charges

HAVANA, 7 JUNE

Cuba's former president Raul Castro made his first public appearance since being indicted by the US over his alleged role in the 1996 downing of two civilian aircraft. An official video showed Castro, who turned 95, at a celebration with top officials and military leaders at the Ministry of Interior in Havana on Friday night. State TV broadcast footage of Castro, dressed in his olive-green military uniform, entering a packed theatre to a standing ovation, accompanied by his grandson and bodyguard Raúl Guillermo Rodríguez, and President Miguel Díaz-Canel. Since the May 20 indictment, slogans like "Raúl is Cuba, and Cuba is untouchable" have appeared across Havana and social media. —*PTI*

Krishnan, behind US AI policies, to resign

WASHINGTON, 7 JUNE

Chennai-born Sriram Krishnan, the architect of US President Donald Trump's policies on artificial intelligence, is stepping down from his role as senior policy adviser at the White House.

The 42-year-old made the announcement of leaving his role as Senior Policy Advisor for Artificial Intelligence in a post on X on Saturday.

"After a break I'll be working on helping tackle some of the large challenges facing America on AI (more on that later)," Krishnan said.

Krishnan was an architect of the Trump administration's "AI Action Plan", which provided a blueprint to roll back regulation of the emerging technology and promote the build-out of data centres across the country.

Before joining the government, Krishnan was a general partner at the venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz and worked at Facebook and Twitter. He is a close ally of Elon Musk and advised him on his 2022 takeover of Twitter, which was renamed X.

Born in Chennai in 1984, Krishnan earned his Bachelor of Technology in Information Technology from SRM University in 2005, before moving to the US two years later to join Microsoft.

Krishnan's appointment to the White House drew sharp criticism from Trump's right-wing influencers, such as Laura Loomer, who said Krishnan had supported removing some caps on green cards. —*PTI*

Bangladesh, Turkey to boost defence, political ties

DHAKA, 7 JUNE

Bangladesh and Turkey have reached an understanding to form a joint ministerial level committee on defence and foreign affairs to strengthen bilateral political cooperation, the state-run BSS news agency reported quoting the prime minister's press wing.

The decision was announced on Saturday after a meeting between Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, to further deepen the "strategic relations," the press wing spokesman said.

The press wing said the discussion also focused on the Rohingya crisis, climate change, trade and investment, joint production and cooperation, and regional and international matters of mutual interest. Turkey has expressed interest in cooperating with Bangladesh in establishing arms manufacturing facilities as well, reports suggested.

Fidan said, "Bilateral trade currently stands at $1.3 billion. We discussed potential initiatives to increase it to $2 billion. There are opportunities to expand cooperation in various sectors, particularly the defense industry."

The two countries also signed a MOU on cultural exchange and heritage preservation.

Rahman thanked Turkey for its support to Dhaka, particularly for backing its candidate for the presidency of the 81st UN General Assembly session and extended an invitation to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to visit Bangladesh. —*Salar News*

TRUMP POSTS BIZARRE AI SONG PRAISING HIMSELF

WASHINGTON, 7 JUNE

US President Donald Trump jousted with artificial intelligence once again, posting a bizarre song revolving around the line 'Trump, Trump, Trump, Trump, Trump, Trump, Trump, everywhere I go they love Donald Trump'.

The 79-year-old Republican posted the song and its video on Truth Social, while endorsing New York Congressional candidate Anthony Constantino, who claimed credit for the lyrics.

However, like Trump's previous AI videos, this song featured a range of iconography that could be construed as racist or orientalist. The song listed places where Trump was "loved", including Mexico, Italy, the Middle East, China, Africa, India, with videos of him eating a taco, riding a camel, or a bike outside a temple. Throughout the video, Trump was seen doing his 'YMCA' dance. —*ANI*

B'desh's fastest trial: Couple sentenced to death

DHAKA, 7 JUNE

A court in Bangladesh sentenced a couple to death for the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl, marking the country's fastest murder trial, completed in just five days. The Dhaka Metropolitan Child Repression Prevention Tribunal handed down the verdict 19 days after the incident, which sparked nationwide outrage over violence against women and children. Judge Masrur Salekin sentenced Sohel Rana and his wife, Swapnaa Khatun, to death and imposed fines of Taka 5 lakh (USD 4,073) and Taka 2 lakh, respectively, to be paid to the victim's family. The court ordered that if fines were unpaid, properties could be confiscated. The case drew widespread attention amid concerns over rising child abuse and sexual violence. —*PTI*

1 dead in West Bank 'terror attack'

TEL AVIV, 7 JUNE

One person was killed and One person was killed and five others injured in a series of shootings near the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Sunday, in what Israeli authorities are investigating as a terror attack.

Emergency service Magen David Adom said the first shooting was reported at a gas station near Kokhav Yair at around 10.30 am. Additional shootings were then reported in Tsur Natan, Tsur Yitzhak and near the Israeli settlement of Sal'it in the West Bank.

The attacks at multiple locations initially raised fears that several coordinated assailants could be involved. Israeli police said one suspect was killed and launched ground and aerial searches for accomplices. Police identified the attacker as a Palestinian citizen of Israel from the nearby Arab town of Taybeh.

Residents in the affected areas were instructed to remain indoors, while schools placed children under lockdown. Officials said the incident heightened concerns about security after 7 October. —*PTI*

Saudi-Pak to develop Karachi port as biz district

ISLAMABAD, 7 JUNE

Pakistan has signed an MoU with Saudi Arabia for developing 140 acres of prime land into a maritime business district on the Karachi Port Trust waterfront, which will also help expand the national fleet by 50 per cent.

The MOU was signed between Karachi Port Trust (KPT), the Saudi Business Council–Najd Gateway Holding Company and Arif Habib Dolmen REIT Management Limited (AHDRML) on Saturday, Minister of Maritime Affairs Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said.

"The main purpose is to... develop a modern infrastructure that would create employment opportunities," Chaudhry said.

Notably, this comes amid a water shortage in Sindh province . The administration fears that rice production may be hit. Sindh produces 5.5 million tonnes of rice annually, generating $1.4 billion.

Sindh produces 5.5 million tonnes of rice annually and generates USD 1.4 billion through exports. The province submitted an indent of 130,000 cusecs of water this season, but only 100,000 cusecs have been released. —*PTI*

PoK's Gilgit-Baltistan votes in crucial polls

ISLAMABAD, 7 JUNE

Voting is currently taking place in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir's Gilgit-Baltistan region for the legislative assembly. The process began at 8 am and will continue until 5pm. A total of 1,391 polling stations have been established across the region, with 488 classified as normal, 349 as sensitive, and 551 as highly sensitive. The assembly comprises 33 seats, of which 24 are contested through direct elections, and eight are reserved for women, technocrats, and professionals.

Historically, the party in power in Islamabad has secured victory in these elections. India has lodged a strong protest with Pakistan over the elections, asserting that the region is Indian territory that has been "illegally and forcibly" occupied.

India reaffirmed its well-known stance that the entire Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the so-called Gilgit-Baltistan, are integral and inalienable parts of India.

This claim is based on the "complete, legal and irrevocable accession" of Jammu and Kashmir to India in 1947. —*PTI*

Armenia heads to polls that could reshape global ties

YEREVAN, 7 JUNE

Armenians voted on Sunday in Parliamentary elections that could decide its geopolitical future as incumbent Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan seeks closer ties with the EU and US, amid longstanding Russian relations. Many analysts favour Pashinyan's Civil Contract to retain control, but opposition parties pro-Russia highlight Armenia's uncertain international stance. Russia warns that EU integration could harm trade, with Putin comparing Armenia's direction to Ukraine's. Relations soured after the 2023 Karabakh conflict, exposing Russia's failed security guarantees. Pashinyan's efforts include joining the International Criminal Court and suspending the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. Opposition parties, led by figures like Samvel Karapetyan, oppose Western alignment. —*PTI*

FACE 'HUMILIATION'

Palestinians lack proper toilets in Gaza's 'tent cities'

KHAN YOUNIS, 7 JUNE

There is not a single proper toilet across the vast tent cities housing most of Gaza's 1.7 million Palestinians left homeless by the war, says a report by Associated Press (AP). Displaced families have to dig their own latrines. In many cases, the toilets are simply a shallow pit in the sandy soil, with a concrete and a bottomless bucket over the hole, covered by a plastic toilet seat.

The toilets emit a foul odour and attract flies and mosquitoes only a few feet from where the families sleep and prepare meals. They also have to dig the sewage sludge out of the pit.

Palestinians inspect the rubble of a building destroyed in an Israeli airstrike at Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip on Sunday —*PTI*

"I did not want the kids and my wife to use any public toilet. It is humiliating," said 38-year-old Mostafa Shaaban, who was driven from his home city of Rafah by Israeli forces two years ago and eventually settled in a tent camp in Khan Younis.

At communal camp toilets, men, women and children wait in long lines, and then crouch behind a thin cloth or sheet of metal. Women fear walking to the communal toilets at night.

Building a latrine is not cheap. A porcelain toilet seat runs from 1,700 to 2,000 shekels (USD 500 to USD 680), out of reach for most families.

More than 80 per cent of the sewage pumping stations in Gaza have collapsed under Israel's bombardment and offensives over the past 2 ½ years, rights groups say. The US-backed official overseeing the ceasefire in place since October has blamed Hamas for holding up the process by failing to reach an agreement on disarmament. —*PTI*

Ola consumer turns profitable as rivals lose Rs 100 cr

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Ola Consumer has turned cash-flow positive and achieved profitability, expanding its lead over rivals such as Rapido and Uber, which reportedly spend Rs 80-100 crore and over Rs 100 crore per month, respectively. Ola's FY25 operating revenue was about Rs 1,171 crore, surpassing Rapido's Rs 934 crore, with estimates suggesting net revenue of Rs 250-300 crore in the latest quarter. The shift towards monetisation and cost efficiencies over discount-led growth has helped Ola become free cash-flow positive in FY26's fourth quarter and break even EBITDA in FY27. Industry insiders say Ola's focus on unit economics and operational improvements contrasts with competitors' heavy capital expenditure, reflecting a move towards sustainable profitability amid changing investor priorities. —*PTI*

NSE investor accounts cross 26 crore milestone

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

The NSE of India has surpassed 26 crore (260 million) investor accounts, with over 4.3 crore added in the past year alone, signifying increasing retail participation. Most recent growth saw over one crore accounts added in just under four months. The exchange highlighted expanded investor education initiatives, with programmes increasing fivefold from FY20 to FY26. Mobile trading now accounts for over 20 per cent of cash market turnover, aided by a simplified KYC process. Maharashtra leads with 4.4 crore accounts, followed by Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal, and Rajasthan. Participation from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities is rising, with mutual fund SIP accounts also increasing, boosting overall market engagement and equity ownership among retail investors.—*ANI*

Indian packaging sector remains optimistic for FY27

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Leading Indian packaging firms face challenges from rising raw material costs and supply chain disruptions caused by West Asian geopolitical tensions but remain optimistic about FY27 growth. EPL Ltd's CEO, Hemant Bakshi, said, "The crisis has affected both availability and cost of key raw materials," but assured, "We are very confident we can manage the cost impact." Uflex's Sumeet Kumar expects FY27 to outperform FY26, citing rising incomes and urbanisation. TCPL Packaging reported export disruptions due to shipping challenges, but its domestic business is strong, with volume growth outpacing broader trends. Akshay Kanoria noted, "We expect a good year domestically, though rising fuel prices and inflation may impact future demand." Long-term industry prospects remain positive despite near-term uncertainties. —*PTI*

FPIs pull out ₹43,000 cr in first week of June

AI trade, rupee weakness weigh on Indian equities

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Foreign investors continued to pare their exposure to Indian equities, pulling out nearly Rs 43,000 crore in the first week of June amid a shift of global capital towards technology and artificial intelligence (AI)-linked opportunities overseas and persistent weakness in the rupee.

Total outflows by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) from Indian equities have reached Rs 2.67 lakh crore so far in 2026, surpassing the Rs 1.66 lakh crore withdrawn during the whole of 2025, according to the National Securities Depository Ltd.

According to the data, FPIs were net sellers in every month of 2026 except February. After pulling out Rs 35,962 crore in January, they turned net buyers in February, investing Rs 22,615 crore—the highest monthly inflow in 17 months. However, the trend reversed sharply in March, when foreign investors withdrew a record Rs 1.17 lakh crore. Selling continued in April (Rs 60,847 crore) and May (Rs 32,963 crore), while the exodus persisted into June, with FPIs pulling out Rs 42,927 crore in the first week alone.

"Apart from higher US yields and dollar strength, global investors are also reallocating capital towards some of the largest technology and AI-related public market opportunities currently emerging globally. The upcoming SpaceX IPO, along with anticipated capital market activity around leading AI companies, is attracting significant global liquidity, leading to temporary capital rotation away from emerging markets, including India," Alpha AMC Founder Rajesh Singla said.

Given the importance of foreign portfolio flows in financing the current account deficit and supporting the balance of payments, policymakers have announced a series of measures aimed at attracting overseas capital.

These measures include the RBI absorbing hedging costs on FCNR deposits mobilised by banks, expanding the forex swap window, increasing access to government bonds through the Fully Accessible Route (FAR), and raising investment limits for non-resident Indians (NRIs) and overseas citizens of India (OCIs) in Indian equities. —*ANI*

FPIs were net sellers in every month of 2026 except February –*FREEPIK*

- Total outflows by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) from Indian equities have reached Rs 2.67 lakh crore so far in 2026

Mcap of 7 of 10 top firms falls by Rs 1.25L cr

The combined market valuation of seven of the top-10 most-valued firms eroded by Rs 1.25 lakh crore last week, with Reliance Industries taking the biggest hit, and bearish trend in equities.

Reliance's Mcap dropped Rs 39,718 crore to Rs 17,47,321.40 crore. TCS faced an erosion of Rs 20,134.66 crore from Rs 7,95,346.09 crore.

Bharti Airtel's market valuation dived Rs 18,736.04 crore to Rs 10,96,150.49 crore and that of Larsen & Toubro tumbled Rs 16,880.2 crore to Rs 5,43,956.44 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of LIC diminished Rs 14,610.74 crore to Rs 5,05,873.32 crore.

Bajaj Finance lost Rs 9,681.36 crore from its mcap, which stood at Rs 5,53,580.97 crore. The valuation of Hindustan Unilever declined Rs 5,909.23 crore to Rs 4,98,301.31 crore.

However, the mcap of State Bank of India jumped Rs 12,692.09 crore to Rs 9,02,523.63 crore. The valuation of ICICI Bank went up Rs 4,484.86 crore to Rs 9,05,074.77 crore and that of HDFC Bank climbed Rs 4,101.47

IBC FRAMEWORK

–*FACEBOOK*

Reliance Infra faces trading curb, seeks insolvency review

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Reliance Infrastructure Limited in a statement on Sunday said that it has sought a review of the insolvency-related surveillance framework, under which trading in the company's stock is allowed only once a week.

It added that it has submitted a formal representation to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), National Stock Exchange (NSE), and Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), seeking a review of the Additional Surveillance Measure (ASM) linked to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). Citing adverse impact on more than 7 lakh public shareholders, Reliance Infra said that the current framework, which permits trading only once a week within a narrow ±5 per cent price band, results in price movements that are largely mechanical and predictable.

It emphasised the need to ensure that market mechanisms continue to facilitate fair price discovery and maintain investor confidence.

In its representation, Reliance Infrastructure has proposed a calibrated approach that retains key risk-mitigation measures, including gross settlement, 100 per cent margin requirements, Additional Surveillance Deposit (ASD) and price-band safeguards, while enabling more effective price discovery.

According to the company, the ASM framework was triggered despite the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) staying both the insolvency admission order and the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) against Reliance Infrastructure. —*PTI*

'Indian firms get less govt aid than Chinese peers'

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

According to an OECD report, Indian firms received significantly less government support than their Chinese counterparts between 2005 and 2024. The report estimates that Chinese firms received, on average, three to eight times more government support.

The OECD's MAGIC Database of Industrial Subsidies tracks actual support received by firms covering 525 of the world's largest manufacturers across 15 sectors from 2005 to 2024.

It measures subsidies through grants, tax concessions, and below-market borrowing. The OECD is a 38-member grouping of mostly advanced economies, including the US, UK and Japan.

The report also said around 22 per cent of the global market share gains of firms that grew between 2005 and 2023 can be attributed to subsidies.

For Chinese firms, almost 60 per cent of their global market share gains can be explained by the subsidies.

World Trade Organization members making no subsidy rose 70 per cent, eroding trust in global markets, it said.

India is also a major clean player in sectors such as steel, cement, fertilisers, heavy and machinery. —*PTI*

WITH SEBI & RBI

'LIC in talks with regulators over liabilities'

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

State-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is in discussions with regulators including RBI, SEBI, and IRDAI to develop long-term investment options, as inflows into its annuity products increase, CEO R Doraiswamy said.

Annuity products convert retirement savings into lifelong income, requiring LIC to match long-term liabilities with suitable investments.

Doraiswamy noted, "We have been in touch with the regulators and communicate LIC's requirements to them." He added that IRDAI is proactively ensuring market needs are met, aligning regulations to support long-term funding for infrastructure and nation-building projects. LIC's long-tailed annuity liabilities span 30 to 50 years.

Doraiswamy expressed optimism about maintaining a high net Value of New Business (VNB) margin, aiming to improve margins through higher ticket sizes and volumes. He also discussed plans to establish a fintech arm to meet digital demands and explore strategic investments.

Regarding stake dilution, he said LIC is completely prepared for further government action, with the next public offering on hold due to market volatility. —*PTI*

India's oil demand to surge 44% by 2035

ST PETERSBURG, 7 JUNE

India will account for about half of global oil demand growth, rising by 44 per cent to nearly 8 million barrels per day, and 15 per cent of the increase in global electricity consumption, surging by 80 per cent to almost 3,000 terawatt-hours, by 2035, making it one of the world's most important energy markets, Igor Sechin, chief executive of Russian oil producer Rosneft, said, peaking at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

He warned that the conflict around the Strait of Hormuz and broader geopolitical tensions pose risks to India's energy security, further affecting fertilizer shipments and raising the risk of higher food prices. —*PTI*

CBI conducts searches in ₹661 cr IDFC Bank fraud case

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

The CBI has conducted searches at six locations in Chandigarh, Panchkula and Delhi-NCR in connection with an alleged Rs 661 crore fraud involving the siphoning of government funds from departments of the Haryana government and the Chandigarh administration, officials said on Sunday.

"During investigation evidences have surfaced suggesting that the public servants had colluded with bank officials and had facilitated in opening of accounts, transfer of funds and subsequent diversion thereof," the statement said. The agency alleged that the public servants received undue advantages for facilitating the transactions and failing to act against the irregularities.

The searches were carried out on Friday at premises linked to senior Haryana cadre public servants and Noida-based Vipam Consultancy Pvt Ltd and its director as part of an ongoing probe into the alleged misappropriation of funds parked with IDFC First Bank and AU Finance Bank, an official statement said.

The probe stems from one case taken over from the Haryana State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau and two cases originally registered by the Economic Offences Wing police station in Chandigarh. —*PTI*

Tata Steel delays UK low-carbon plant amid electricity access issues

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Tata Steel faces a six to eight-month delay in its UK low-emission project at Port Talbot, with issues in securing electricity access. The £1.25 billion plan aims to establish the UK's largest low-carbon electric arc furnace (EAF) to replace a now-shut blast furnace, cutting site CO2 emissions by 90 per cent. Tata Steel's Koushik Chatterjee said, "National Grid's connectivity project is delayed," and the company is working with stakeholders to mitigate the impact.

Despite the delay, demolition is complete, and equipment fabrication continues. The project, supported by £500 million government funding, was scheduled to start by late 2027 or early 2028. Meanwhile, Tata Motors' Chairman, N Chandrasekaran, reaffirmed ongoing investments in electric and hydrogen-based technologies for commercial vehicles.

- Tata Steel faces a 6 to 8-month delay in its UK low-emission project at Port Talbot, delays in securing electricity access.

He highlighted that the transition requires a portfolio of zero-emission electric, hydrogen, and cleaner internal combustion engine (ICE) technologies. Chandrasekaran stated, "We will continue to invest in hydrogen technologies for heavier-duty segments," supporting sustainable mobility and resilient growth. —*PTI*

NCLAT quashes Ligare Aviation insolvency case

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has overturned insolvency proceedings against Ligare Aviation, ruling that the NCLT erred in admitting Religare Enterprises' plea. The tribunal said the transactions were merely "round tripping of money" with no genuine financial debt involved, thus not fulfilling insolvency criteria under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

The NCLAT stated, "The material clearly proves there was no financial debt for consideration of the time value of money." It criticised the NCLT for ignoring the fact that the amount transferred was immediately remitted back within 24 hours, with the MoU being a "sham document" created dishonestly.

The order highlights that the transactions were undertaken for "undisclosed fraudulent purposes" and not genuine debt creation, setting aside the NCLT's decision. —*PTI*

NET WORTH OF $89.2 BILLION

Adani Asia's richest person again with $89.2 billion net worth: Forbes

MUMBAI, 7 JUNE

Billionaire industrialist **Gautam Adani** has once again become Asia's richest person after a sharp rise in his net worth driven by gains across listed Adani Group companies, according to a Forbes report.

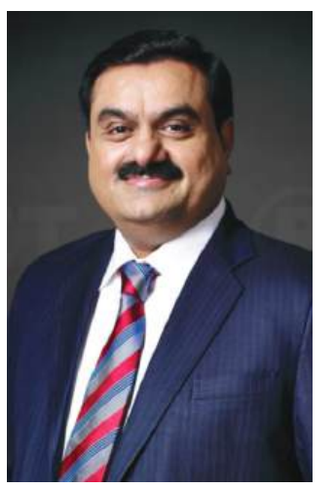
Forbes reported that "Gautam Adani's fortune increased by roughly USD 2.5 billion on Friday as shares rallied across his Adani Group subsidiaries," helping him overtake Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani at USD 88 billion and SoftBank founder Masayoshi Son at USD 87 billion.

According to Forbes' Real-Time Billionaires List, Adani's net worth rose to USD 89.2 billion, placing him ahead of Ambani "Adani's net worth swelled to USD 89.2 billion, ranking him ahead of Ambani (USD 88 billion) and SoftBank's Masayoshi Son (USD 87 billion)," Forbes said in its report.

Forbes noted gains in several Adani Group stocks, including Adani Power, Adani Ports, Adani Enterprises, Adani Green Energy and Adani Energy Solutions. It added that Adani Green Energy gained 6.9 per cent while Adani Energy Solutions rose 3.8 per cent.

Forbes further said Adani's wealth has increased by nearly USD 10 billion since the US Justice Department dismissed fraud charges against the Adani Group last month. Adani and his co-executives had denied the allegations, Forbes noted.

The report also highlighted the scale of the Adani Group's listed businesses, stating that the combined market value of six major Adani Group companies stood at about USD 191 billion as of Friday.



Adani's return to the top position marks a significant comeback after a prolonged period of volatility following allegations made against the group in recent years. —*ANI*

Private investment rises to ₹56 lakh cr in FY26: SBI

MUMBAI, 7 JUNE

Private investment announcements in India surged to Rs 56 lakh crore in FY26 from Rs 37 lakh crore the previous year, signalling a strengthening investment momentum despite concerns over private sector capex. According to SBI Research's Ecowrap report, overall investment proposals increased from Rs 17 lakh crore in FY19 to Rs 80 lakh crore in FY26, reflecting rising business confidence.

Manufacturing led in FY26 with 28.9 per cent of new proposals, followed by power (28.7 per cent) and infrastructure (23.1 per cent). The report notes a 10.8 per cent growth in gross fixed capital formation in Q4 FY26, alongside an increase in the gross block of over 5,000 listed companies from Rs 87 lakh crore in 2022 to Rs 145 lakh crore in 2026.

The findings suggest private investment is becoming a key in supporting India's economic trajectory. —*PTI*

Tilak, Siraj get big bids in inaugural TG20 player auction

MUMBAI, 7 JUNE

India's T20 vice-captain Tilak Varma fetched the highest bid of Rs 33 lakh from Medak Falcons at the inaugural TG20 player auction here on Sunday. Tilak was appointed on Saturday as the vice-captain of India's squads that will tour Ireland and England for five T20Is, which will be led by Iyer. Tilak's India teammate Siraj joined the Warangal Warriors. The Warriors picked up the pacer for Rs 14 lakh. Both Tilak and Siraj were Icon Class players, while there were other categories such as A+ and A.All-rounder CV Milind became the most expensive uncapped player, with Anvita Aces securing him for Rs 17 lakh. The inaugural TG20 will commence on 21 June at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, Uppal, with eight franchises competing in 32 matches over 21 days.—*PTI*

UFC Fight Night: Gabriel defeats Belal Muhammad

LAS VEGAS, 7 JUNE

Former UFC welterweight champion and Chicago native Belal Muhammad had no answers for Brazil's Gabriel Bonfim, who secured his 20th win in 21 MMA fights by securing a unanimous decision (50-45, 50-45, 50-45) win in the main event of UFC Fight Night in Las Vegas on Saturday night. Bonfim (20-1) used crisp boxing to bloody and batter Muhammad's nose throughout the 25-minute fight. Through a translator, Bonfim showed respect to Muhammad (24-6, 1 NC) for his toughness and resolve, thanking him for a competitive fight."Our game plan, we put it (into) perfection, and it happened," Bonfim said following the win. Bonfim (20-1) said he wants to remain active.—*PTI*

Kochhar stays in the top 10 at IGPL Bharath Classic

EL JADIDA , 7 JUNE

Karandeep Kochhar remained the best-placed Indian at the IGPL Bharath Classic despite slipping to tied 10th after a third-round 2-under 70 in challenging windy conditions here. The 27-year-old from Chandigarh moved to 7-under for the tournament but dropped from overnight tied fifth as Thailand's Settee Prakongvech surged into a three-shot lead at 13-under with a bogey-free 68. Overnight joint leaders Runchanapong Youprayong (71) and Sweden's Charlie Lindh (67) were tied second at 10-under.—*PTI*

-PTI

Nayanika lead Indian golfer in Arkea Ladies Open

MONTAUBAN, 7 JUNE

Nayanika Sanga played her second successive even par round to be the lead Indian golfer after the second round of the Arkéa Montauban Ladies Open on the LET Access Series here. Starting the day on T-21 at Golf de Montauban, Nayanika played herself into the top 20 with one round left to play. She is now T-18 with an even par score. Saanvi Somu (72-73) is the other Indian player in the field. She carded 1-over 73 to drop six places and find herself in T-27. Saanvi has a total score of 1-over par after two rounds. She made two bogeys and one birdie in her second round. Genevieve Ling, Sarah Skovgaard Bils, Marine Griffaut and Lucie Malchirand shared the lead heading into the final round with a score of 6-under par.—*PTI*

Suthar's 3 wickets leave AFG 5 down at stumps

India declared their first innings at 564 for 8

MULLANPUR, 7 JUNE

Debutant Manav Suthar's classical left-arm spin bowling was a beacon of hope for a bright future as his three wickets gave India complete control on the second day of their one-off Test against Afghanistan here on Sunday.

With mercury soaring, India declared their first innings at 564 for 8 once Washington Sundar scored a pressure-free half-century while adding 54 useful runs with Suthar (28 off 41 balls).

At stumps, Afghanistan were tottering at 113 for 5 with Suthar recording figures of 3 for 21 in 15.5 overs.

Prasidh Krishna (2/27 in 7 overs) was the other wicket-taker. Hosts, now, are ahead by 451 runs. Having warmed up nicely with a short yet sweet maiden Test knock, Suthar got into the act straightaway after being summoned to bowl the last over before tea. He removed opener Abdul Malik, who wanted to sweep his way out of trouble after looking clueless facing the first three deliveries.

A classical action and the old school diagonal run-up of bowling to right-handers while cutting between the umpire and stumps, the 23-year-old from Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar was a delight to watch.

In times when spin bowling is increasingly starting to become more of a restrictive weapon, thanks to the mushrooming T20 leagues, Suthar brought a lot of freshness while sticking to basics -- flight and turn.

Suthar has a high release point, and his main attributes include putting multiple revs (revolutions) on the ball. He could hang the ball for an extra second in the air and also get some drift before it turns away from the right-hand batters.

The 23-year-old has a repetitive action, and the pitch map on TV showed that he could land the ball on the same spot and make it do three different things. If Suthar's impressive initiation into the Test arena is any indication, Indian selectors can hope for a smooth transition as and when Ravindra Jadeja is phased out from the red-ball format.

India's Manav Suthar celebrates with teammates -*PTI*

Earlier, Rishabh Pant answered his critics in the best possible manner with a stroke-filled 81 while Afghanistan pacer Mohammad Saleem enjoyed the fruits of labour in punishing weather with figures of 6 for 140.

In front of a sparse Sunday crowd, Pant did play his signature strokes but also curbed his instinct to go after each delivery, treating each ball on its merit during his 121-ball knock that had six boundaries and three sixes.

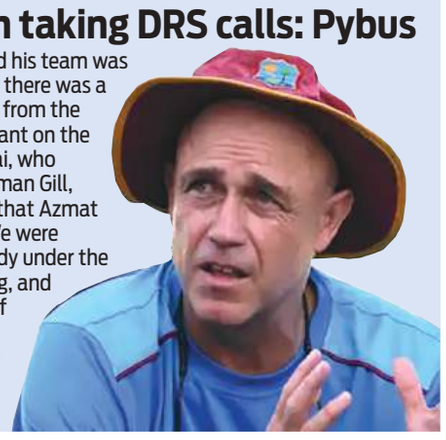
He should have completed his century, but debutant left-arm spinner Nangeyalia Kharote slowed the pace considerably.

Pant charged down the track but couldn't fully reach the pitch of the delivery as the lofted hit ballooned up for a simple catch.

For Afghanistan, their IPL star Azmatullah Omarzai was distinctly unlucky. He was impressive with the second new ball, beating the bat on several occasions without much luck.

Afghanistan 113 for 5 (Rahmat 43*, Suthar 3-21, Prasidh 2-27) trail India 564 for 8 dec (Gill 126, Rahul 100, Saleem 6-140) by 451 runs. —*PTI*

We were exceptionally rusty in taking DRS calls: Pybus



Afghanistan head coach Richard Pybus on Sunday conceded his team was exceptionally "rusty" in terms of taking correct DRS calls, as there was a singular lack of conviction even when there were clear nicks from the Indian batters. KL Rahul on the opening day, and Rishabh Pant on the second day, had edged one each to wicketkeeper Afsar Zazai, who didn't bother appealing. In the case of Indian skipper Shubman Gill, keeper Zazai's reluctance didn't help as TV replays showed that Azmat Omarzai had trapped him plumb in front of the wickets. "We were exceptionally rusty. It wasn't clear, without throwing anybody under the bus, I think there was a lack of conviction in decision-making, and at the end of the day, the skipper's got a very short period of time to make those decisions in, and he's reliant on that feedback. We chatted about it afterwards because we were obviously way off the pace with that, and it cost us," Pybus said at the end of the day's play.

FRENCH OPEN 2026

Katerina Siniakova and Taylor Townsend powered their way to the first French Open triumph together -X/@*FRENCHOPEN*

Top seeds Siniakova and Townsend clinch women's doubles title

ROME, 7 JUNE

Katerina Siniakova and Taylor Townsend powered their way to their first French Open triumph together, beating second seeds Anna Danilina and Aleksandra Krunic 6-2, 7-5 in Sunday's doubles final.

The top seeds weathered an early slump in the second set when Czech Siniakova netted multiple returns, but American Townsend's clinical winners got them back in the contest before Siniakova's powerful serving clinched their third Grand Slam title as a pair. "I don't know which time I'm congratulating you again, I'm kind of getting sick of this," Krunic jokingly told the 30-year-old Siniakova, who has now won 11 Grand Slam titles in women's doubles, including four at Roland Garros. Kazakhstan's Danilina and Serbian Krunic have now lost two French Open finals in a row, after also losing the Australian Open final in January.

The second seeds controlled the net in the first four games as the scoreline remained even. But Siniakova's powerful overhead lobs, often set up by Townsend's serves out wide, helped the top seeds to win the next four games. An early break put Danilina and Krunic 3-0 up in the second set.

Mirra says she had to overcome so many demons inside to win

Bent over with her hands covering her face, her knees getting dirtied on the red clay court, Mirra Andreeva was celebrating processing might be the more appropriate word how she had finally overcome "so many demons inside" that came with being a teenage tennis phenom.

After bursting onto the scene at 15, Andreeva became a Grand Slam champion at 19 when the Russian ended the run of 114th-ranked Polish qualifier Maja Chwalinska with a 6-3, 6-2 victory in the French Open final on Saturday. "I've done a lot of visualisations before.

Not just this tournament, but I've had dreams, I've had a lot of thoughts on how it's going to happen, if it's going to happen, when it's going to happen, where," Andreeva said, still hardly breathing as she talked quickly in true teenage style. —*Agencencies*

Animesh clinches silver in 200m at Taipei event

TAIPEI, 7 JUNE

Indian sprinter Animesh Kujur won silver in men's 200m on the second day of the New Taipei City Athletics Championships 2026 in Taipei on Sunday.

Kujur clocked 20.47s, some way off his National Record-setting timing of 20.32s. However, this is his season-best effort, enough to breach the qualifying standard for the Commonwealth Games 2026 (20.61s).

He finished behind Thailand's Puripol Boonson, who eased to first place in 20.03 seconds.

On Saturday, long jumper Shaili Singh and the women's 4x100m relay team won a gold medal each, while Tejas Shirse bagged a silver in the 110m hurdles. —*PTI*

DAY 4 AT LORD'S

England's Bazball reset begins with 115-run win over New Zealand

LONDON, 7 JUNE

England wrapped up a 115-run victory over New Zealand before lunch on Day 4 of the first cricket Test at Lord's on Sunday, marking a positive start to its "Bazball" reset after the Ashes humiliation Down Under.

Resuming on 55-5 and requiring 254 for an unlikely win, New Zealand lost its remaining five wickets inside the first two hours of play and was dismissed for 138.

England pacer Gus Atkinson finished with team-best figures of 5-30 on a challenging, bowler-friendly surface at the home of cricket that saw 24 batters out bowled or lbw.

It was fitting that the match ended with the middle stump flattened after Atkinson clean-bowled Kiwi tail-ender, Matt Henry. That left Glenn Phillips stranded at the other end on 44 not out, making him New Zealand's top scorer of a disappointing test for the tourists.

"You've got to play what's in front of you, you've got to identify the conditions as a team and understand what you think is the best way for you to go out there and win," England captain Ben Stokes said of the conditions in a match that lasted just 166 overs.

England 140 (Brook 56, Jamieson 5-62) and 226 (Gay 57, Smith 6-70) beat New Zealand 113 (Robinson 5-39) and 138 (Atkinson 5-30) by 115 runs. —*PTI*

IGU names 6-member team for Asian Games in Japan

NEW DELHI, 7 JUNE

Yuvraj Sandhu and Aditi Ashok were among a six-member Indian golf team named on Sunday for the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, later this year.

A LPGA Tour regular, Aditi won an individual silver medal in the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, China.

Sandhu (World No. 451), Veer Ahlawat (World No. 558) and Saptak Talwar (World No. 576) are the three male members, while Aditi (World No. 135), Diksha Dagar (World No. 221) and Pranavi Urs (World No. 270) are the three female players named by the Indian Golf Union (IGU).

The golf events for both men and women are scheduled from September 30 to October 3 at the Kasugai Country Club East Course. The IGU, led by Brijinder Singh, said the entries were decided as per its selection policy for the Asian Games. "We have got a supremely talented and efficient squad, which has someone like Yuvraj Sandhu, who won seven times on the PGTI circuit last year. —*PTI*

VICTOR LAI ENDS JONATAN CHRISTIE'S INDONESIA OPEN TITLE DREAM

JAKARTA, 7 JUNE

Indonesian men's singles star Jonatan Christie finished runner-up at the BWF World Tour Super 1000 Indonesia Open 2026 after losing to Canada's Victor Lai in the final at Istora Gelora Bung Karno, Jakarta, on Sunday.

Playing in his first Indonesia Open final, Jonatan was defeated in straight games, 19-21, 8-21, as Lai claimed the biggest title of his career.

The opening game was closely contested, with both players trading points throughout. Jonatan briefly took control, but a series of unforced errors allowed Lai to stay level.

After the mid-game interval, the Indonesians fought back to level the score at 13-13, setting up a tense finish. However, Lai remained composed in the closing stages, capitalising on several mistakes by Jonatan to move ahead and earn four game points at 20-16.

Jonatan narrowed the gap, but the Canadian held firm to take the first game 21-19.

The second game proved far more one-sided. Jonatan attempted to dictate play early on, but Lai's solid defence and consistent shot-making quickly put him in control. The Canadian raced to a 6-1 lead and maintained his advantage throughout the game.

Struggling to find his rhythm, Jonatan trailed 5-11 at the interval as Lai continued to exploit openings and force errors from the Indonesian. —*PTI*

LOST TO BANGLADESH

PCB mulls axing of Test head coach Sarfaraz

KARACHI, 7 JUNE

After the recent 0-2 drubbing at the hands of Bangladesh, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is mulling to sack the Test team's head coach Sarfaraz Ahmed and captain Shan Masood.

The PCB sources informed that the board was in talks with former players Younis Khan and Muhammad Hafeez, asking them to take up some key posts with the national team.

"I can confirm that Younis Khan and Muhammad Hafeez have both had talks with PCB officials about joining the board in key positions. But things have yet to be finalised," the source said. He said advisors of PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi suggested a revamp in the Pakistan Test squad set-up after the defeat against Bangladesh. "There is a proposal to remove Sarfaraz as head coach and hand him back the responsibility of managing the national under-19 and A sides," the source said. He said Sarfaraz could only face the sack once the board was able to reach an agreement with former captain Younis, who in the past had kept some strict conditions for accepting any post. The source said the board was certainly looking at replacing Masood as Test captain, although he had asked for more time to lead the team in the coming away series against West Indies and England.

Hafeez, he said, was being considered to step in as chief selector and also head the international cricket department, but only initial talks had been held between him and the board officials.—*PTI*

Messi sits out Argentina's friendly against Honduras

TEXAS, 7 JUNE

Lionel Messi sat out Argentina's friendly match against Honduras on Saturday night as he continues to manage muscle fatigue and a mild strain in his left hamstring ahead of the upcoming World Cup.

Messi, who turns 39 in three weeks, was active after warming up with his teammates at Kyle Field on the campus of Texas A&M before the game. He stayed on the bench, though, watching from the sideline as Argentina won 2-0.

The team has said Messi's recovery time will depend on "his clinical and functional progress." Argentina next plays Iceland in Auburn, Alabama, on Tuesday in a final World Cup tune-up before resuming its training in Kansas City.

Argentina begins its World Cup title defence against Algeria at Arrowhead Stadium on June 16.

During workouts in Kansas City on Wednesday, Messi came to the practice field after the rest of the team and did some conditioning work off to the side. —*PTI*